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Pittsburg

# LES TROIS ROIS.

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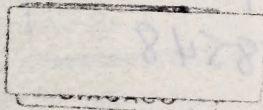
BY

ROBERT P. NEVIN,

AUTHOR OF "BLACK-ROBES," "TRACKS OF A TRAVELER," &C.

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## PREFACE.

The writing of *LES TROIS ROIS* was undertaken with a view to its appearance as a Magazine article. The subject, however, grew so in the sketching, in face of the desire to keep it within compass, that, completed, it was found to be quite out of size for the Magazine for which it was intended. It was then decided to publish it in its present shape.

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1888

BY

ROBERT P. NEVIN.

Books treating of the histories of Pittsburgh have already been written, but, as exclusively of 'Facts, and nothing but Facts,' that may they, the bearing few like 'Gladright,' with a rule and a pair of scales, and the multiplication table always in their pocket, are willing to undertake their reading. The unphilosophic many have no relish for that sort of entertainment. They do not object exactly to Facts, but prefer that they should be presented in some form other, and less uninviting, than in the naked—with a nothing of our flesh about them, rather than in the bare skeleton. To show that preference—to show in such a light as to invite the popular eye, and so inform the popular mind of what with its forces and resources Pittsburgh is—in what has been here attempted.

The idea of adapting the legend of the Three Kings of Europe to the purpose in hand, was taken up, not to give pre-



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Books treating of the industries of Pittsburg have already been written, but they consist, all, so exclusively of 'Facts, sir; nothing but Facts,' that only they, the figuring few like Gradgrind, 'with a rule and a pair of scales, and the multiplication table always in their pocket,' are willing to undertake their reading. The unciphering many have no relish for that sort of entertainment. They do not object exactly to Facts, but prefer that they should be presented in some form other, and less uninviting, than in the naked—with something of fair flesh about them, rather than in the bare skeleton. To meet that preference—to show in such a light as to invite the popular eye, and so inform the popular mind of what with its forces and resources Pittsburg is—is what has been here attempted.

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PREFACE

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ferred prominence to persons, but because it afforded a convenient device for grouping naturally and consistently in a one picture the three leading, but diverse, subjects treated of; and, besides, as calculated to excite that livelier interest always felt when the individual figures in a narrative.

The companion pieces to 'Les Trois Rois,' 'Tom the Tinker' and 'Stephen C. Foster and Negro Minstrelsy,' appeared originally, the latter in the *Atlantic Monthly*, and the former in *Lippincott's Magazine*, by kind permission of whose publishers they are here reproduced.

VINE-ACRE, February, 1888.



# LES TROIS ROIS.

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## I.

IN the arms of the goodly City of Cologne one may see emblazoned the heraldic device, in right stately display, of Three Crowns. How the fair old town came to appropriate that loftily-regal bearing, the stranger within its gates, curious concerning the mystery, need not seek far to be informed, since the legend that reveals it hangs on the tongue, tickling to tell it, of whomsoever among its denizens he may happen to encounter, on the streets or at their corners. Thus:—

When our Lord was born, certain Magi, as saith the Gospel, saw his Star in the East and came to worship him. They were Kings, as it had been prophesied they should be, these Magi; “Kings of Tarshish and of the Isles; Kings of Sheba and of Seba,” and worthy therefore of honorable respect—a respect second only to that to which they were entitled by reason of the still nobler distinction declared of them, that they





were 'Wise Men.' Coming down, these Wise Men, to Bethlehem to worship, they in turn—so is it that reverence begets reverence—themselves were worshiped. Before them, living, people bowed the knee in honoring homage ; and when in time they died, as Kings, even though Magi, must, they sainted them and held them sacred.

Years later, when good Christians began to learn the value of that sort of property, their bones, disinterred, were carefully conveyed to Milan. A long repose awaited them there, but it was broken at length when Barbarossa came down and laid siege to the city. Then, that harm should by no chance befall them there, they were taken up and carried to Cologne. Here in the old Cathedral built by Charlemagne, were they finally planted, and here, happily for the city, have they remained undisturbed ever since. Happily for the city, for marvelous truly, and manifold, have been the fruits that have grown out of that planting. Was the old Cathedral caught on an unlucky day, once, and consumed by fire? The bodies of its Saints lay where they lay, amid the heat and the blaze of the burning, but, like as with the Three Children of Judea put through a like trial, 'the flames did not kindle





upon them,' and out they came whole and sound, their wonder-working virtues quickened, not quenched, by the ordeal. As was presently to be made appear; for while the town's people were sorrowing still, and sighing, over their great misfortune, lo! a miracle! Up from out the ruins of the old Cathedral began to rise the walls, planted wide, and deep, and strong, of a new! It was of massive, magnificent design, the new, and took long time in finishing into shape—so long time that but for the saving presence of its Saints, the foundations of it would have crumbled into ruins ere yet the top-stones of its towers were laid. But—blessings on their bones!—Magi may build slow, but they build surpassing sure; and there, in its place perfect now, at last, it stands, a wonder to gaze at and admire; of its kind and in its order, in all the wide world without an equal.

Alone, this signal proof of favor, so generously bestowed, might have established for the Saints a full title to popular gratitude, but having begun, it was with no purpose to let cease to their work. Long as the City cared for their bones the Saints would care for the City. As they did; not sparingly, but bountifully, and with a liberal concern—which was duly appreciated—for its secular, as



well as its spiritual advantage. Thus, while hallowed, and hallowing, relies—of Theophania, say, and of St. Gereon, and of the Eleven Thousand Virgins—with sanctuaries befitting in which to enshrine them, multiplied, at even pace grew and increased the resources of traffic; so that soon, commensurate with the fame of its altars became the fame of its wares—its snuff and its wax, its soap and its sugar, and—precious above all—its water. And so it came to pass that the hearts of the people leaned with a warm affection towards the Wise Men, their patrons and protectors; that pilgrims and merchants from far and near flocked in to do them duty—to buy and to pray, and that grace and gain, thus joining hands, have gone on since, prospering and to prosper together. And so it came to pass that the renown of the Magi—Gaspar, Melchior, Belthazar—was established; their names rendered illustrious, and themselves destined to live on always, in proud and imposing distinction, as LES TROIS ROIS — the THREE KINGS OF COLOGNE.

As from my window I look out upon our city, amazed at the picture I see presented of it there,





as contrasted with its aspect, still remembered, of fifty years ago, I am reminded of this olden legend of the venerable town on the Rhine, and I wonder, is there not more of fact, after all, than of fancy in the story, and may not that which has been told of Cologne, be over again told, with a just, if not a juster, propriety, of Pittsburg? Have we not, too, our Bones of Wise Men—bones, moreover, not dry, nor bare, nor dead, like the bones of the Magi in the old Cathedral, but living, fresh in flesh, and with nerves and sinews to match? And miracles?—Why what are they, the marvelous most, the most amazing, that the canonized of Cologne, or for that matter, of anywhere else in all Christendom, ever wrought, compared to the wonders worked, and working, in the mill of mills for such grist, down on our rivers here? See the smoke, the flames, the vapor, rise, and roll, and swell, and mingling, risen, in colossal mass pile up against the clouds! Hear, sounding out from the palled area below, the roar, the shrieks, the groans as of big she-Gorgons or Chimeras many, in the agonies of labor; and up and down the rivers, and up and down their valleys, hear and see, the keels in fleets afloat, toil, groaning and striving, heavy-laden,



through the water; and steaming engines with their long serpentine lengths of burdened trains behind, rush hither-ward and hence-ward along the shores! Miracles, aye;—of which these sights and sounds are but the signs—the shadows and the echoes: shadows and echoes; and yet, as in witness of superhuman endeavor at supernatural undertakings, and of successful, substantial achievement, the all-sufficient proofs. For they tell how Earth has been compelled, out of her secretest and strongest holds, to yield up her hoards of precious ores, and how the forces of Nature have been seized, subdued, its elements mastered, and both harnessed into service—to reduce them, refine them and forge them into shape for use.

Would you know from what beginnings—beginnings so unpromising, so commonplace—results so extraordinary have followed?—what the advances, the progresses, culminating in these wonders? and who the Gaspar, Melchior, Belthazar—the Wise Men—the Three Kings—the workers of these wonders? Attend to what in days to come shall be told as the legend of our time, and learn.



When, a mere jumble of few, cheap huts, Pittsburg first found for itself a name and a place in the map of the land, it was pretty much like one of the brats newly-born on its premises—scrubby, squalid, and generally of most unpromising appearance. Bantling of the old Fort, whose name by right of parentage it bears, the nursing it received was nothing to speak of; for the Fort, on its last legs, had quite as much of a contract on hand as it could manage, to take care of itself. But for all that—perhaps the better for all that—the bantling grew, up through the stages of crawling, cutting of teeth, weaning, until, its period of youngster-hood well entered, and left an orphan,—the old Fort done for and gone to rot,—it was forced to fall back on its own resources for a living.

Casting round for an occupation, the little town hit upon one, perhaps to its choice, perhaps not; but which, since it wore a favorable aspect, and particularly as it seemed to be about the only available in offering, it made haste to adopt.

Settlements had been started at different neighboring points in Western Pennsylvania, as well as in Kentucky and Tennessee, the last-mentioned





somewhat remote but approachable by means of the floating facilities afforded by the Ohio River. Their fertile lands contributed plentifully to the support and comfort of these communities. They had their corn and their meat in abundance to eat; their home-woven flax and wool to wear; and their wine, or a liquor still more generous in lieu thereof, wherewithal, like unto the wine of Lebanon of old, to solace the elders and to make the young men cheerful.

But the best of good things in having never sates the desire, always craving, after good things still better. Their tables and wardrobes furnished to fulness with the necessities of life, a longing sprang up for its luxuries. Out of the sparings, over enough for home consumption, of what they grew and what the wilds around them afforded, might not a trade be opened and exchanges made for the coveted goods in the markets of the East? The little town caught at the suggestion, and proceeded to put it in execution. It had found a calling and would make the most of it. The business, with its, at first, limited possibilities of patronage, had of course to be conducted accordingly—on as cheap a plan, and with as close an eye to economy, as might be. Camels had been



tried and approved as carriers in another East. True, these "Ships of the Desert" were not at command here, but Schooners of the Wilderness—hacks of back-woods breed, "hollow pampered" but hardy,—were, and the Pack-horse, as meeting the conditions needed, became the chosen vessel of transportation.

Outward bound, the lading, in this commercial enterprise, consisted of skins, furs, whisky, bees-wax, herbs medicinal, such as ginseng, snake-root; and *petroleum*, held in high esteem as a specific for head-ache, tooth-ache, rheumatism, small-pox, and "in demand among white people," as says Loskiel, "at four guineas a quart." The bales for return trips were made up of bar-iron for horse-shoes, gun-powder, lead, salt, knives, pots, calicoes, dimities and such-like sundries—sometimes, rarely, in precious parcels for bridal wear at marryings—silks. The route, from start to terminus, was a long, difficult and somewhat perilous one. Mountains were to be climbed; dark gorges threaded; floods forded; morasses, tough and deep with mire, gone through; storms encountered; with, along, across and through them all, a narrow, ill-defined trail only, to offer footing and point out the way. There were no





inns to lend accommodation to man or beast. Under tents of chestnut or pine-trees, pitched and standing in great camps all along the line, shelter as needed was found, with, for rest and for sleep, ready laid, couches of leaves and pillows of mosses.

The pack-horseman carried with him his own needed supplies of provender—corn, ground for himself, and in the grain for his cattle. When he would add meat to his fare, he had but to look, out of the horned herd that ran wild in the woods, to select a victim, and with his rifle bring him down. The rifle was an item of furniture indispensable not only for such use, but as a means of defence against robbers, by whom he was not infrequently waylaid; robbers bold in daring, desperate in action, (or ballads lie that tell of them) and whom none, however defiant, cared, except upon compulsion, to encounter. Twenty-five miles to the day was the average rate of travel, so that two weeks, exactly, were required to cover the three hundred and fifty between Pittsburg and Philadelphia—counting Sundays in, that is; and it has sorrowingly to be confessed that, passed beyond sound of the church-going bell, our fathers were not as precise to remember



the Sabbath day to keep it holy, as Presbyterians, true to their catechism, should have been.\*

These, and many other such as these, difficulties and drawbacks in the pack-horse enterprise had to be met, but it was carried on in spite of them. It was found to be a paying business; moderately so at first, but growing in profit faster and faster with every fresh season's prosecution of it. Old settlements widened as the years went on; new ones were planted; homes increased numerously—more numerously the families that inhabited them; clearings multiplied; like as grain ready for the harvest before the scythe of the reaper, so at edge of the steel of the axe-man, swath by swath, in steady mowing, fell the statelier crop in the vaster field of the forest. The barns of the farmers were filled with the produce of their lands, their folds with sheep, and the stalls of their stables with cattle. They waxed fat, and, as against their hitherto close limitings of self-

\* And yet caution had to be observed in such desecrations of the day. George Nixon and Philip Bradley having too boldly ventured, once, to pass through Hannas Town, were arrested "for Breaking Sunday by following their ordinary employment of driving pack-horses," and for the offense were fined six pounds.



indulgence, like Jeshurun of old, they kicked. Pittsburgh—it was in the line of its trade—saw what were the growing wants of its customers, and was neither slothful nor negligent to supply them. Highways, broad and evenly graded, to take the place of scant and scraggy ‘trails,’ were opened. For the grand main thoroughfares, turnpikes were laid. Pack-saddles as contrivances, weak and insufficient, for the carrying of merchandize, were laid aside, and the Wagon was employed in their stead.

\* \* \*

Huge affairs, and stout as hickory and oak, well banded and bolted in place with iron, could make them, were these Wagons. And great need was there that they should be, to bear the heavy burdens with which they were freighted. Their beds, except in very rare slack seasons, were always packed to the brim—often, when loadings were light of weight comparatively, up above that level in a round heap, to the very ribs of the bowed frame supporting the canvas by which from end to end they were covered and, with its fastenings, corded in. The teams that did the hauling consisted of four, sometimes six, horses ;





all of first-family blood, and meriting well the generous care and keeping they received. From his saddle on the stallion at the 'left wheel,' the driver, with a single line attached to the bridle-rein of the animal in the lead, directed their course. He carried a pliable leathern whip ('black-snake' he called it), a good handful in size at the butt, tapering gradually to a point, and terminating in a short, twisted silken lash, which it was his pleasure to flourish and make go off, with a crack like the shot of a pistol, about the flanks and the ears of his cattle. A dog, to serve on watch at night, was usually, while on the route, to be seen walking either at rear of the wagon or under its tongue, between the wheel-horses, in front. Bells of different diminutive sizes, attached in sets, like chimes, to bands of brass that reached, bending in graceful curves, from hame to hame over the horses' shoulders, once in a while were to be heard, ringing out their merry jingle on the air. Glad to the ears of dwellers by the wayside were these ringings of the bells—gladder still to their owner's, for they came to be his by fair winning at general competition, and every separate sound sent out was as a voice to proclaim that his



was the banner wagon, his the team of teams, and he the champion driver of the road.

The wagons had a carrying capacity, each, of from four to five tons. A day's journey was about equal to that of the pack-horse, some twenty-five miles. The teams had fatiguing labor to undergo and toiled at it slowly; never advancing their pace beyond a walk, and a lazy, loitering one at that. The drivers were not severe upon their 'beasts'; did not incline to overtax them; let them jog along pretty much as they pleased; locked the wheels not to have them urged too fast coming down the hills; and stopped, not seldom, for long rests between short pulls, going up. Time was not money in those days, or if it was, men on the road were not miserly in the spending of it. At sunset, if a tavern were at hand,—as one generally was, since they were planted a proper day's journey, as nearly as possible, apart,—the team arriving turned into its yard: if, however, kept back by accidental delays, none such accommodation offered, no matter; the nearest walnut tree, or willow, growing on the wayside, with the pump or spring under it, afforded all the shelter, and the only other unprovided want—water—that was needed. Thus





suited, the driver unhitched his horses; stripped them of their gears; posted them, haltered, in pairs on opposite sides of the tongue—to which had been fastened previously a trough or feeding-box, unhooked for such use from its carrying-place at the rear end of the wagon-bed—supplied in full measure, and left them, satisfied, to the enjoyment of their rations—their corn or their oats. A hamper (private) was then brought mysteriously to view, out of the miscellaneous contents of which—a brown paper parcel savorily, not to say greasily, suggestive of gammon sandwiches, a green-glass bottle with a corn-cob stopper, a twist of tobacco and a pipe—were extracted meats and accompaniments, enough for a feast, for himself and his dog. Night fairly fallen, his hunger satisfied and his pipe smoked out, he climbed into his wagon, out of the softest bales arranged a bed; then, with above and about him, the twinkle of stars, the chirp of crickets, the moan of doves, the far-off bark of cur or mastiff, with their lulling influences, to invite, and a final pull at the green-glass bottle to complete, the yielding, he resigned him to sleep.

The scene, with such an air of tiresomeness and languor about it in the evening, wore a livelier



aspect in the morning. Then was there pawing of feet and rattling of halter-chains, and a throwing back of ears, and shrill screeches, and ill-tempered bitings at each other among the horses, restive from rest, and cross from hungering and a too long unrewarded waiting over an empty trough. Then, on the part of the teamster, was there handling of feed-bags, and carrying of water, and currying of cattle, and examining of hoofs to assure against loose shoes and chance bruises; then, one by one, the taking off, and one by one again the putting on, of wheels to lubricate the axles, filling thick the air around with the odor of tar, in the operation. Then the harnessing and hitching in of horses; the helping up into the wagon, for relief after his night-long watch, the dog—who found his rest there, all he seemed to need, in sitting at front on his hind legs, and looking out from under the canvas in contemplative survey of the scenery along the road; the mounting into saddle; the flourish of the whip; the crack of the lash, whose bark was worse than its bite; and then at last, with a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull altogether, the strained start and painful going of the wain, in its move on another new day's journey.



Push did not seem to be understood, in the days herein written of, as a concomitant essential to progress. It was taken for granted that as in its old-fashioned, soberly-regulated way the earth moved, so should move all lesser matters, in which power of motion lodged, on its surface. Once started a-going, they should be let go, in their own order and in their own way. It would be wrong to prevent progress, and yet not right to lag behind: the proper thing was to link arms, as it were, and side by side trudge along, keeping same step to same slow music with it. Long as the Pack-horse could be, he was depended upon and stood by. When in the steady course of events, it was found that the burden of business was too much for his back, the inevitable was accepted; he was dropped to make room for a fitter vessel, and so came in the Wagon. But the crisis was reached at length, when the Wagon likewise had crowding on it more than it could carry, and then gone was its occupation—gone to give way to a new and still more largely accommodating rival—the Canal-boat.

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Glad, though staidly so, were the good folk of Pittsburg, when the Canal, finished complete and flooded to the full, was declared open at last for navigation! Glad the dealers in the town's markets—the buyers of rare stuffs in the marts of the East, and the sellers of the same! Jubilant the traders in corn and in rye; in pork, in wool, in whisky; to find a channel offer, reliable for prompt and safe delivery to other traders over by the sea, of their barrels and their bales! Transported the transporter as from his dock he watched to see the keels, weighed belly-deep down with freight, pull out in first venture upon their distant voyage! The very mules (two, in tandem,) that were the motive-power to the new-fangled craft, touched by the prevailing enthusiasm, grew frolicsome like their betters—cocked their ears, switched their tails, kicked up their heels, and with a start and a—Well, well; if they behaved with unbecoming, perhaps indelicate, levity, the occasion was remembered and they were forgiven.

There was not much—in fact nothing—to boast of either way, when one came to compare rates of speed attained, or attainable, as between wagon and canal-boat. Both were slow coaches at smartest. If the end of an hour found the latter



advanced two miles beyond where the beginning took it up, reasonable progress had been made ; if three miles, then the mules achieving the work had done nobly, and were entitled to rank, on the tow-path, with the horses that carried the bells on the turnpike. But the differences, other than this, were great, and all in favor of the Canal-boat. It required from four to six horses to haul a load of five tons by wagon. Two mules could tow, with no more toil, a boat weighted with five times five tons, aye, and a fifth of as much more, in its hold. For teams on the turnpike eight or ten hours at pulling were considered a fair day's portioning for a fair day's work. On the tow-path it was tramp, tramp, tramp, from daylight to dark, from dark to daylight, all the time—making, thus, a gain of actual going ahead of some sixteen out of twenty-four hours' count, equal to well-nigh forty miles, over the wagon. Nor were the mules at all over-tasked at their work. If they had their 'on's' at toil they had their 'off's' for rest as well ; for each boat had its force of four, so that, turn about, while one pair tugged at the rope, on shore, the other rode at elegant ease, as passengers, in a private state-room on board.



The crew of a boat consisted of a captain, a steersman, two drivers and an elderly woman cook. The duty of the steersman was to stand at his helm—or sit on it if he liked; to steer shy of lee-shores; to smoke the pipe of peace, and between puffs, when so disposed, to drop driblets of dallying discourse down through a hatchway, close in front of him, for the delectation of the cook in the kitchen. The captain's responsible business was, to walk the deck; to scan at times, with side-long glance, distant horizons, as though suspicious of storms brewing there-away somewhere; when he came to a lock, to trumpet '*Slack!*' to the driver through his hands, commandingly; un-pin the tow-line with a touch of his foot on an iron spring, and let the craft free from its cable, float in through the gates; then, in presence of the lock-keeper, as afterwards, meeting other boats with other captains on their decks, gruffly to hail his pilot with, '*Hard a-helm there, damn your eyes!*' not wickedly nor maliciously, but—professionally, say, as significant of his office, and so that land-lubbers loafing about should learn that he was master of that, his craft—knew what discipline was, and how, according to approved naval usage, to exercise and maintain it; nothing more.





At his post of service, the driver, away by himself and cut off entirely from communication with his friends—except through speaking-trumpets—might be supposed to have had a lonely time of it. And so he had. But he did not cavil at it; in fact he rather liked it. His hours may have been tedious, but they were not tasteless. To while them away, if in his lighter mood, passing by where scattering habitations were, he would exchange jolly greetings with the good-man leaning idly against his door-post; wave cheery salutes to the wife, from behind looking over her spouse's shoulder; tip sly winks to the cherry-cheeked daughter peeping out at the window, and, if afoot, and fairly tempted to it, throw a flip-flap on the tow-path, to the wonder unutterable—and how to the rapture!—of the small boy staring out through the bars of the garden-gate. Meditatively disposed, he could find solace for himself in silent communion with nature; lending an ear to her sermons in the stones; or, less seriously inclined, borrowing entertainment from her books—old-fashioned scrolls—in the running brooks, unfolding to him roll after roll of romance and of poem—read by the light of the lamp of the moon, how bewitching!



If high were the hopes which Pittsburg cherished, at the opening of this new channel for her commerce, they were fully realized. From the date of her day of small things,—the pack-saddle period—when the people within her gates were but as a handful, she had kept on growing; slowly, but steadily, healthily growing. From year to year, span by span did she lengthen her cords and stretch forth the curtains of her habitations. The scant scores of her population multiplied into hundreds, these, during her Wagon age, into tens of hundreds, until at the finishing of her canal (1832), they had reached a total of seventeen thousand souls. Nor had the country, meanwhile, proved less progressive than the town. The time that was, when lands in whole sections were ownerless, and could be had any day for the taking, had long gone. Acres were havings and holdings worth money. Farms lay, not scattered sparsely here and there, in far-apart patches with wide breadths between of waste wilds, but everywhere; close, compact, as settings in a mosaic—just what they looked to be.

Multitudes coming in to occupy the land, the Border was continually crowded back and back. Of various blood and breed the new possessors of



the new properties, their very differences worked to advantage; for while the Yankees—the later importation—were staking out their townships on the plateaus under Lake Erie, and peopling them prolifically, the Scotch-Irish natives, with a praiseworthy spirit of emulation, were extending their settlements down along the Ohio River. Tons upon tons increasing with every year, of the reapings of the vast fields thus brought under cultivation, were hauled or floated up and down the highways and water-courses centering there, to seek a selling-place through Pittsburg. The ware-houses at the docks—great sheds with spacious floors—had freights crowded into them more than they could shelter; and the canal-boats—the time had come, which it had been fondly imagined never could come, when even they were taxed to the extreme to do expected service; and only that, and then, by close bestowing, and after delays vexatious to the carrier, and disappointing to his customers.

This state of affairs could not last long. The demands of traffic, enlarging all the time, had to be met, actively, not negligently, or the town's mainstay to its prosperity would be lost. There was a needful place—that was evident—to be filled; and the 'Wanted' for it—an operator,





earnest, energetic, aggressive; a One, inspired—a Wise Man—to know what, toward keeping ways clear and making things move, was to be done, and to see it done—that needed, too, to be supplied. And it was.

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WILLIAM THAW was quite a young man—only seventeen years of age—when, in 1835, he was offered, and accepted, a position as clerk in the forwarding and commission house of McKee, Clarke & Co. In this subordinate capacity he served for five years; a term long enough, put industriously to use, to qualify him thoroughly for the higher place he was called to, at its expiration in 1840, as junior partner in the firm of Clarke & Thaw. That, stepping into this new enterprise, he was putting foot on ground slippery and uncertain, he knew. The venture was attended by no having, or commanding, of circumstantial advantage. The ground was quite fully occupied, as it was. Old stagers, such as Lloyd, and Graff, and Taaffe, and McFaden, and—last on the list, but foremost of all in fame and in fortune—David Leech, were in the field; nor did they drive slow



coaches, any among them, either. Money, not a little, was required to set a new establishment afloat—more, considerably, to keep it from sinking afterwards. The canal, owned by the State, was a free highway, open, like a turnpike, to all who chose to take to it, and pay the tolls; but the transporters had to attend to their own outfitting—build their own boats, and buy their own mules.

For their forwarding, westward, the River was there at command, but they had to furnish their own steamers. Competition, as to charges, ran high among the houses; too high for compensation to keep up with it, and that was about the costliest feature of the business. These, and such as these, were the hills of difficulty that had to be surmounted; these, and such as these, the Giants in the way to be wrestled with and overcome. The young partner, the man of action in the new house, was not intimidated, and did not shrink at view of them. He had faith in his enterprise, faith in himself, and—fail? There could be no failure; in his lexicon there was no such word. So, before-hand, advised, and so, presently, assured, he entered the arena.

Thus far advances, considerable and important



certainly, in the carrying trade had been made. The turnpike had brought with it a gain great over the 'trail'; compared to the wagon the pack-saddle was a toy. Still greater was the gain of the tow-path over the turnpike; the wagon of the one was a puny, tubby affair; but a cock-boat, on wheels, contrasted with the carack of the other. But, gone thus far, improvement went no farther. The same old dilatoriness in locomotion prevailed; the same undervaluing, and consequent putting to loose profit, of time. The horse had gone at a walk on the road; the mule went at a walk on the canal. In fact, everybody, everything, went at a walk. '*Festina lente*'—'take it easy'—was the motto men served under; the rule they worked by. They did not see the preciousness of the property they were trifling with—how it might be utilized, and how put to account. But now there was an eye of keener perception about—the new, and more enlightened, Adventurer's—that did; and straightway turned was there a new leaf, and begun a new chapter, in the annals of the business. Action—lively, stirring action—became the order of the day. Success was a reward that to be won had to be raced for, and the contestants set at it accordingly. The easy-going ways of





the boatmen were corrected. Captains, cautioned, buckled more tightly to duty; drivers brisked up, and mules, tickled to it, stepped out for all that was in them. Boats walked the water like things of life, and grass was a gone growth on the tow-path. The Portage road (of rails) across mountains, connecting broken ends of the canal at Johnstown and Hollidaysburg, had been the occasion of much cost both in time and in money, necessitating, as it did, an unloading and a loading over again of all cargoes while on their passage to or from Pittsburg. This was a hinderance not to be endured. To overcome it, boats were built in sections so that they could be taken apart on one side, placed on trucks, rail-roaded over, and, re-united, set afloat again on the other, with scarce a pause to their progress.

The revival they started on the canal was of a type mild compared to the out-break of it on the River. The wharf along the Monongahela was the scene of liveliest activity. Steam-boats lined the shore from one graded end of it to the other. On board, men, thick and busy as ants, moved serving about—groups in the light on deck, sharing labors at lifting, or lowering of freights with groups in the dark, down in the holds below,



and giving work to other groups receiving what was to be received, or discharging what was to be discharged over the planks of the gang-ways. 'Rats' swarmed the shore heaving at hogsheads, and casks, and crates, and bales, and tumbling them home to heaps high out of water-reach on the wharf. Drays, carts, wagons, rolled thumping up and down over the cobble-stones in steady, continuous round, bringing back burdens in full return for what they came to bear away.

But the object inviting notice most, and chief to be noticed in the scene, was the steamer, the casting loose of whose cable from its fastening on shore, the drawing-in of whose gangway-planks, and a last quickly-struck warning of whose bell—the large swinging one on the hurricane deck—gave signal of departure. For as the River was its great channel of commerce to the city—that upon which this, its then leading pursuit, depended most for continued prosperity—so, accordingly, great was the popular interest that centered in it, and in all that pertained to it. They had a passion for a boat, the people, ardent as that of a lover for his mistress. So had the Captain. It was a joy to him to manœuvre her at starting so as to show off to advantage her



points; her symmetries of form, her graces of motion; but more than a joy—a perfect blessedness—to give proof of her speed, when fairly out and free to go on the water! That, after all, like charity among its sisters, was to her the virtue of virtues; without it she was nothing.

Rivalry ran high among the Captains. As in the turnpike days the wagon that out-spied the rest won the high right to wear the bells, so the steam-boat making the fastest run enjoyed the proud distinction of carrying the 'horns'—the branching antlers of a buck. The honor could go to but one boat, of course, but all might contend for it; and not without prospect of advantage, since even though defeated, it was fame worth struggling for to be counted as second, or even next best under second, on the list. The '*Buckeye State*' gained the coveted prize at her first attempt, holding on to it afterwards to the end of her brilliant career.\* The '*Brilliant*' did not care to enter the lists as against her, but that was no reason why she should not try a course with the '*Telegraph*,' or ring out rejoicings from her bell when she won. Sights worth the seeing were these races—sights to stir the blood and make

\* The '*Allegheny*' (Capt. Chas. W. Batchelor) won the horns in 1852, but not as in competition with the '*Buckeye State*' (Capt. Saml. Dean). The course of the former lay between Cincinnati and Louisville, that of the latter between Pittsburg and Cincinnati.





the hearts beat high, of those engaged in them! If there ever was a time when all hands were alive on board, it was then; if there ever was a time when stokers stood willingly up to their task, stripped bare to the belt so as at coolest and freest to front the flames and do their hot work well, it was then! If ever there was a time that coal was found too cold a fuel, and rosin, and tar, and bacon, as of fierier force, were fed the furnaces to make them blaze as they should, it was then! Then, the contagion of excitement quick to communicate, would passengers line the guards, and gather in groups on deck, to watch how held the heat; if promisingly, to flatter, if doubtfully, to warn, the Captain—who needed no warning, but who, at his forward post on the hurricane deck, when the time to prove him came, winked quietly a message to the pilot, who piped its meaning to the engineer below, who told it to the firemen. Then busy moving of feet about the boilers would follow, and banging open and shut of iron doors, and fresh roaring of flames, and a thickening of pitchy, and flitchy, odors in the air; when the strained timbers of the vessel would tremble, and its whole frame shake under pain of its labor—a labor tremendous to endure, but which was to find



no cease nor ease, until its crisis of deliverance came, and cheers exultant on the one side, and sullen silence on the other, told of a victory won, and lost! Severe as was the test to which steamers, on these occasions, were put, they stood it well; and it is still the boast of the one or two yet surviving of their commanders, that never did an explosion occur (among packets of the line, that is), nor ever befall an accident to result either in damage to a vessel, or in the loss of life to any of its passengers.

The improvement in the construction, finish and equipment of these boats, from the date of their first introduction to the time when—when they, too, found their occupation gone, and followed in the wake of the wagon off after the pack-horse, was great. The '*Arabian*,' '*Pioneer*,' '*Wacousta*,' of the first line started (1835), were respectable, indeed, and not unpretty, though plain as compared to the '*Monongahela*,' the '*Hibernia*,' the '*Messenger*,' and other like higher-toned fair ones of the class of '46, but were cast into the shade utterly on the later appearing, one by one in successive seasons along until '56, of such dashing beauties as the '*Allegheny*,' the '*Brilliant*' and the '*Crystal Palace*.'



Wheeling, having her separate avenue of communication with the East through Cumberland to Baltimore, had begun to dispute the right of Pittsburg to a monopoly of the River trade. While the commerce of the latter had now a widespread reach, extending to towns on the Mississippi and along the navigable waters tributary to that river, the port of paramount importance to her—that which contributed most largely to her profit—was Cincinnati. To wrest, if possible, this prize from her rival, was the object of first desire with Wheeling; to hold on to it, at any cost, the resolve of Pittsburg. In this temper both set to work; each doing her extravagant and most costly best to outdo the other.—At the very time, had they but known, when of all times it would have been better for both, far better, to have folded their arms and done nothing. For a new course for commerce to follow had opened, and a new conveyer—a conveyer ‘whose chariots were as a whirlwind, and whose horses swifter than the eagles,’—had come; to deliver to canal and river their death-blow, and to leave tow-boats and steamers corpses on the hands of their owners—dead properties to be broken up and bartered off





for scrap-iron and kindling-wood, fit as they were to them for no more profitable use.

\* \* \*

The Pennsylvania Railroad, when it was finished and got into working-condition (1852) entered upon a career which—so it had been destined—was to bring about an entire change in the affairs of Pittsburg. The city's trade, that to which in its infantile days, under administration of the Pack-horse, it had been apprenticed: to which, under 'boss'-ism of the Wagon, it had done journeyman service, and to the independent prosecution of which as Master-workman, under auspices of the Canal and the River, it had devoted itself, was lost and gone. The places that knew the Forwarding and Commission houses on Water Street were to know them no more. The Dray as an institution, mighty in its day, was to drop, with its driver, into desuetude. So with other classes in other callings—and there were armies of them—holding place or employment in one form of dependence or another, under the old working system; as it went down, they going down with it. But the prime sufferers were the transportation companies. Fortunes had been



expended in the erection of warehouses, the building of boats, the purchase of stock, live and still, for the transfer of freight, and the procurement of properties innumerable besides, necessary to a complete outfit for the establishments; and now, all, at a one stroke—all, with a one common fate, into a one common wreck, were to pass and to perish together! It was a cruel blow. Under shock of it the stricken, helpless and hopeless, —with no heart left to even try at recovery—retired from the field.—All, save one.

Mr. Thaw had not miscalculated in his reckoning of the risks and resistances he would have to encounter in taking up his business, nor had he relied with a confidence unwarranted, as events proved, on his ability to meet them. Once entered upon his calling, with all his might he followed it up. Gains were to be won—so gains worth the having always are—only by hot pursuing and hard striving for; but he had the wind in him, the will and the wear, for that—won from the start, and went on winning and winning. Steadily and strengtheningly his trade grew. Boat after boat was added to the canal. On the River, as old ports—Cincinnati, Louisville, Nashville, St. Louis—from increasing traffic demanded, and



as new ones opening from time to time, on the Upper Mississippi, the Illinois and the Missouri, invited, steamer after steamer was built, until they were numbered by fleets. From first to last Mr. Thaw was proprietorially interested in over one hundred and fifty. These were costly possessions. To have them go, and, what was worse, to have go with them that which the best years of his life had been spent to make great and profitable—his occupation—was more than he would consent to; more than he would submit to—if he could help it.

They who have looked upon the man, and seen his eye—every diamond-pointed arrowy glance of which, shot from the bent bow of its lid, strikes and pierces through and through what it aims at; seen his nose (that expressive feature, up to more than snuff, decidedly), so bold in projection, so clean-cut in outline, with nostrils thin and distent, like those of the war-horse when he smells the battle afar; seen his mouth, tight shut, lip against lip, as though his teeth had seized some stag of a purpose and were holding on to it with the bite of a bull-dog; seen the hairs on his head and in his beard, each short-cropped particular of which, electrically charged with energy, stands stiff on





end; seen the granite-built, pyramidal physique under all; can settledly understand the manner of mortal he is of—can understand that when he wills he wills, and that what he tries he does, or, come to it, in the trying dies. With one such as a disputant in the case, the result can be anticipated. A war between the two powers—mule and locomotive—had to follow, of course; and it followed.

Such a contest might seem an unequal one, but the advantages were not so wholly one-sided then as they are now. The rails of which the road was built, were made of iron, the cheapest in cost—and in quality—that could be bought in the market (for the Company, pinched for money, had to drive close bargains), and were consequently very liable to break, to the wrecking of trains and the running-up of fearful bills for damages. The canal was safe against all such accidents. It could not be hit to be hurt anywhere or anyhow—unless by a “low bridge,” to the knocking overboard of a captain, or a cook come up on deck to air herself, perhaps—a dip that might drench but could not drown, and that therefore could be made of no charge as against the carrier. Trains, with but one track to come and go on, would run into



each other; and so, indeed, might canal-boats,—and so, indeed, might a pair of ducks met on a mill-pond; but the woe only possible in any case to ensue would all fall on the cars. The transporter took the benefit of all favoring chances that offered; made the most out of his advantages, and turned to best account the weaknesses of his enemy. ‘War, war was still the cry, war even to the knife!’ The battle was long and valiantly fought, but it was a losing game from first to last on both sides. Freights were dropped to rates that, perhaps, kept in oats the mules on the canal, and in coal the locomotives on the railroad, but not much more.

For three years did this ruinous rivalry keep up. Money by the million went to waste. Boys that angled in the locks for cat-fish made more profit out of the canal than the transporters. The same contest with the same result attended the working of the ways running West.

Upon the completion of the Pennsylvania it had been considered all-important that other roads should be had reaching out in different directions so as to command the traffic of the West. Persuaded to that effect, the cities Pittsburg and Allegheny and the county Allegheny lent their



credit largely towards their construction, reckoning hopefully on rich returns from the investment; only, however, to be disappointed. The Pennsylvania and Ohio (afterwards the Pittsburg, Fort Wayne and Chicago), the Pittsburg and Cleveland, and the Pittsburg, Columbus and Cincinnati were built, indeed, which was so much gained, but they did not turn out according to expectation. Returns waited anxiously for, failed to come. Confidence languished; sickening with it, shares weakened and weakened, until, sunk in hopeless collapse, they lay for dead on the market. The gospel of repudiation then began to be preached, Thomas Williams, a lawyer of reputation—and the owner of no little taxable property in the cities besides—acting as its chief proclaimer. His stormy eloquence wrought with telling effect. Other owners of other town lots gathered in crowds to hear him, and, glad to have drowned down by the loud-tongued eloquence of so responsible an advocate, the still small voice, protestant, of a secret but surer counsellor, owned and honored his speech with cheers of approval. In his flock of followers were men, many, prominent and of prime moral standing among the people, who would blush to see it so, pointedly, published





of them now. Happily there were honest ones left enough in the community, to save the reputation of the whole. The cities and the county were a little late coming to it, but they came at last; honored their bonds and sustained their credit. The movement was as unwise as it was unworthy. Its natural result was to utterly destroy what little confidence was left in the rail-roads; to make the already bad condition of their stocks desperately worse; to start a 'scare' and on the impulse of it to drive the corporations to a sale of their shares, just at the juncture when down at their lowest notch of depreciation.

Mr. Thaw saw, then, his opportunity and improved it. While others, demoralized by the failures attending their first workings, lost faith in their enterprises, he, relying upon what he knew to be *in* them, rather than what had been feebly and imperfectly, thus far, brought *out* of them, believed, and as they let go, took hold—in his accustomed active, unhesitating way, took hold. He stopped his lines on the waters; sold his steamers, his canal-boats and his mules for what they would bring; closed the doors of his warehouses: and the places on the docks and the quays that had known him for so long, thence-



forth knew him no more. Dog-cheap were the prices his old properties went at; but dog-cheap, too, was the cost of the new—the railway shares into which they were turned. It was a deal of truck for truck, when, as there was no limit to offerings of stock at old-clothes rates, there need be no end to buying on the same terms. He bought: bought freely again and again, and kept on buying. Then—to make sure his cure for past hurts—not content with a hair only, he struck in for the hide in whole of the dog that had bit him—joined with a select coterie of others, formed an organization, and as the ‘Pennsylvania Company,’ obtained possession and secured exclusive control of all the Western roads. His peculiar fitness for the place recognized, his company appointed him its prime executive officer, throwing the chief management of its affairs into his hands.

The position was a responsible one. When, sixteen years before, he first put hand to his business, the West, trading through Pittsburg, had a population all told of about 5,000,000. To carry one way and the other, what this people bought and what they sold in their traffic with the East, kept six richly-equipped transportation com-



panies (not to mention other several smaller and weaker operators) actively employed from the opening of each season to its close. The year 1856 found the West peopled with 11,000,000 inhabitants—mouths to feed and bodies to clothe having more than doubled between the two dates. Now that the canal was a ‘dead duck,’ this service—the demand upon it grown so large already as that the whole force of forwarders, ere they retired, could hardly meet it—fell to the rail-road; fell to the direction of the single brain of the agent placed at its head. The obstacles he had to encounter were many and formidable. The roads, even in their as yet incomplete condition, were in a rickety, half-ruined state. Their rolling stock was no better; and to make still more desperate the case, they stood in such low credit that no one from among the able anywhere outside was found willing to come to their help. This darkly unpromising state of affairs did not dishearten Mr. Thaw. It worked, in fact, exactly the other way—put him on his pluck; caused those resolved teeth of his to shut with a tighter bite, and that upper lip to fasten down and back the teeth for all there was in them.

The road-beds needed to be leveled and bal-





lasted; they were ballasted and leveled. The rails needed to be replaced with an iron of quality better than pot-metal; they were replaced. Cars were sadly wanted to move freight; he advanced the cash, had built and set rolling a hundred of them. The locomotives in use were wizened, wheezy, weak-kneed affairs that along levels and down hills would move cleverly enough, but meeting an up-grade would 'take the studs,' stop, and rather burst than budge. He retired them from the track, packed them off after his other discarded properties, and got new ones built to go, and that did not know what to balk was. Single tracks (all his roads had,) offered open invitation all the time for collisions,—an invitation which trains too often were not tardy to accept. Soon as could be side-tracks at meeting-places along routes were lengthened, more and more lengthened, until, before the public were fairly aware of it, double pairs of rails were laid pretty nearly all the way through from end to end of the several lines. The roads having different termini at Pittsburg, goods in transit had to be hauled by wagon from one station to another, occasioning much delay, cost and trouble. They were extended, bridged across the Allegheny and Monon-



gahela Rivers, and all brought together at a common depot; the one that risen up from the ashes of its predecessor, burned down in the riot of '77, now stands on Liberty Street. Thus the transfer business was brought to a close; a close not ever to know opening again. Old employes, too long habituated to old foggy, slow-going ways to be trained to smarter, were set aside, and new, live ones, that carried Fraudsheim watches and went by them, were put in their places. The 'Star line' was started, a fast freight, the first of its kind, by which goods shipped at Philadelphia and destined for Chicago, St. Louis, Cincinnati, or anywhere else intermediately, could be shipped straight through without a change of cars. Things were reduced to system and put into ship-shape order all the way along. Business boomed. Shares in the several companies rushed up—up. They ran to par—over par—in the market. Their worth came to be invaluable. Everybody wanted them. Holders of trust funds; guardians of orphans; missionary societies; old retired Presbyterian preachers—who, once, afterwards had to umpire a duel between the devil and their consciences before Synods, because of trains running on Sundays, conscience getting the good-bye and



the devil coming in for the award, of course;—all money-handlers, except County Republican Committees and State Treasurers, who preferred to place their cash where—the question of safety not over-carefully considered—it would do the most good; all put what they had for safe investment into them. Good people everywhere seemed to have caught the notion that Providence had taken the roads in hand, and that it was the next thing to laying up treasure in heaven to plant it there. If, looking bluely back at it afterwards, the repudiating cities and county saw how they had fooled away their opportunity: how they had saddled them with a debt at pitiful parting with what would have made them rich had they held on to it, they could take to themselves no better consolation than that they got what they deserved.

Placed on firm footing and fairly started thus, the transportation trade of Pittsburg has since been one of continually growing prosperity. When back in the nineties of the last century John Wright ran his pack-horses, capable each of carrying his two hundred and fifty pounds, he thought, and had the right to think, that he was driving a big trade when he could accommodate with his single stable-full of cattle, if





not the whole, a mighty share at least, of the traffic of the West. Now, not quite a hundred years since gone, William Thaw, his latest professional successor, as official head of the Pennsylvania Company, sees rush through his various lines into and out of the city as high as fifty thousand tons of freight daily. Early got ready of a morning, and early gone, eight, say, of John Wright's horses, with two thousand pounds of lading on their backs, might by night-fall reach Greensburg, some twenty-eight miles—a long day's journey—out on their way. With a single iron steed William Thaw, making even start as to time, could take his three hundred and fifty tons, or more, and, ere John's horses could have eaten their oats next morning, find the same with more than half the whole distance traversed on its way to Chicago. An astonishing run in the race of progress!—and yet not making the measure in full of it either; for other roads, invited by the success attending the Pennsylvania Company's, have been constructed, through whose operation full a fifth of as much more must be added to the sum of daily shippings and receivings at the city's depots, swelling the whole to over sixty thousand tons.



These its iron highways, however, are not the only courses through which the town finds carriage for its commerce, nor is its extent indicated to the full by what they do. The abandonment of the canal brought to an abrupt end the connecting steamer lines on the Ohio, but trade on the river did not perish—not by any means—with its ‘packets.’ True, the proud argosies—the ‘Alleghenys,’ the ‘Messengers,’ the ‘Circassians,’ of its plummy days, with the Batchelors, the Graces, the Beltzhooovers, their courtly commanders,—are known no more on the water, but other keels have taken their place; keels of a less grand order indeed, though for their work none the worse of that; looking, as they do, not to emporiums of the East or granaries in the West, but to the treasure-yielding crypts in the hills about home, for the precious wherewithal to make up their cargoes.

The coal-field, of which Pittsburg is the center, covers a broad area, embracing, with occasional barren or poorly-bearing patches, all the territory within boundaries of old, original Westmoreland County, or, in other words, the State entire of Pennsylvania west of the Allegheny mountains. The richest veins are found in the hills that border the Monongahela and Youghiogheny



Rivers, with the creeks and smaller streams tributary to them. The fronts of the steeps bordering these waters for a hundred miles are orificed all along with dark, deep-throated mouths, open, not to devour, but to disgorge the diet digested of what in æons past they fed and fattened upon. Between pits are to be seen fires burning, by day and by night, of long lines of ovens, in which the crude fuel as burrowed from the mines is converted into coke. Production of the raw commodity alone, employs the toil of over twenty-seven thousand men. The coal dug is packed at the pits in barges. To convey these to down-the-river markets, to which, since the introduction of natural gas into Pittsburg, the trade is mainly confined, requires the service of over one hundred and twenty boats—each capable of towing from six to ten loaded barges, equal, the whole fleet, to one million bushels, or ten acres of coal; each single acre's yield enough to furnish full loading for a 3000 ton ocean steamer. All this, too, over and above what is carried by the rail-roads, amounting to just about as much more. Coke is delivered to consumers in, by measurement although not, of course, by weight, very nearly the same quantity.





To such size, out of the puny, peddling affair it was at the beginning, has grown the carrying trade of Pittsburg. And yet the business, even now, scarcely, if at all, surpassed at any other commercial center in the nation, is really but in its incipency. To what length to reach its *ne plus ultra* of progress it is destined to advance, the generations that are may live to more and more, year by year, wonder and wonder—but never to see. He, our Gaspar—CARRIER KING of the tutelary Three, whose directing providence through well nigh fifty years has trained it to what it is—may pass away, as indeed in the course of nature he must, but his virtue, like that of his prototype of the Royal Trinity of Cologne, shall still lodge in his bones, and the work of his beginning go on. For long as from their inexhaustible holds, the hills around and about, and the bowels of the earth under them yield their riches; long as the boundless, bare fields of half a hemisphere invite to occupation, and plains and mountains multiply their people; long as there are human wants, always increasing and increasing, to supply, so long must the great enterprise, increasing and increasing always too, continue.



## II.

THE want of wants in the early days of Pittsburg, that which it felt the need, and mourned the lack of most, was iron. For the manifold minor purposes for which the metal is now deemed indispensable, its use was never applied. In the one hundred cabins that one hundred years ago clustered about Fort Pitt, perhaps not so much as a nail was to be found. Planks were laid, when laid at all, unfastened on the ground for floors; roofs, of clap-boards, were held in place by logs laid transversely across them; doors were hung upon oaken hinges, and held shut by oaken latches; while tables, bedsteads, stools and other like household furniture, were supported on wooden legs fitted into auger-holes in the slabs out of which they were made. Philadelphia and Baltimore were the nearest points at which metal could be obtained, whence worked into bars it had to be carried on pack-horses—the bars bent bow-wise so as to ride securely on the saddles—



at such charges (from twelve to fifteen cents per pound), as, added to the original cost, made its purchase an extravagance too costly to indulge in except as absolute necessity compelled. A singular state of affairs surely, this carrying of coals to New Castle, as one would take it; for ore, rich in the raw material—and more than plentiful, could be had close at hand almost anywhere for the digging. The mountains were bosom-full, the lesser hills below thick-ribbed through and through with it. Nor were the settlers ignorant of the fact, as how could they be, with proofs palpable before them in the washings along shores of running waters, and in the stray nuggets of ‘blue lump’ turned up again and again by plowmen in the furrowing of their fields? But, like as to the Ancient Mariner famishing a-thirst, with

“Water, water, everywhere,  
Nor any drop to drink,”

what to the distressed borderer was all this profusion of crude substance when he was without the chance to purge it of the dross which defiled and unfitted it for use? The art by which this was to be done was no mystery to him, but the cost of preparation and, after, the





outlay necessary for the practical prosecution of it, meant an expenditure, with—in view of the lean and limited market to supply—so doubtful a promise of return, that men with nerve enough to try the venture had long to be waited for. But they came at last.

In 1790 two merchants of Philadelphia, Messrs. Halker and Turner, dealers in metal and hollow ware, having their attention called by the yearly improving demand for their pots and kettles to the growing importance of the place, undertook a visit to Pittsburg. They had been told of the rich mineral region of which the town was the center, and sharply alive to business, thought that the time had perhaps arrived when it was worth while to come on and take a look at it. They came, they saw, and, satisfied, resolved forthwith to run the risk and build a furnace. Associating with them M. Marmie, a young Frenchman, formerly private secretary to Lafayette, they started out to explore; selected a site on Jacob's Creek—a stream that empties into the Youghiogheny—four miles from its mouth, and thereon erected their plant. They named it the "Alliance." Providence seemed at first to smile kindly on their enterprise, for, besides the quite



lively demand that sprang up through the country for their stoves, sugar-kettles, Dutch ovens, pots, skillets, and other such wares (for molding went with melting from the ore in those days), they had not long been in operation before an order was received from Major Craig, in command of the garrison at Pittsburg, for *four hundred six-pound shot!* A princely contract—and from Government too! It came a glad surprise—as why shouldn't it?—to the proprietors, and put them in high feather. Halker and Turner, level-headed old tradesmen, were happy over the purchase, most happy, of course; but serenely, not insanely so. Marmie, born to the inheritance of a different temper; inclined to the light pursuits rather than the grave employments of life, and impatiently waiting while he worked for the means to gratify that inclination, was, on the other hand, in a wild ecstasy over it. **FOUR HUNDRED SIX-POUND SHOT**—all in a one-job lot, and each shot in the lot worth a dollar! There was wealth untold—there was independence in it! The sportingly-disposed ex-secretary determined to make the most of the chance the gods had given him. Now that he could, he would take his ease; eat, drink and be merry. And he ate and he drank, of the



choicest and the best, and to the top of his bent was merry. He had his horses and his hounds; deer were to be found for the hunting in the mountains; for livelier chasing foxes abounded and seldom was it when

“A southerly wind and a cloudy sky,  
Proclaimed it a hunting morning,”

that hill and hollow did not echo to his horn, and ring responsive to the baying of his hounds.

It could not be otherwise than that Marmie should soon find these pursuits more pleasant to him as a sportsman than profitable as a manager. Business felt the evil that followed from neglect; uncared for, cared not for itself—drooped, weakened, declined, sinking sufferingly; until at last came the collapse, the fatal collapse, for which there was no remedy, from which there could be no recovery. The furnace failed. The unhappy calamity fell upon Marmie with distressing effect. It left him helpless, despairing, distracted. He could not bring himself down to the level of the common toiler, where only he could find place now, and with a long prospect of labor and privation ahead, begin life over again; his pride revolted at the thought of it. There remained an alternative, only one, and to that, frightful as it





was, he resolved to resort. Calling his hounds he assembled them on the 'bridge' that led to the mouth of the furnace. With whip and halloo he urged and scourged, driving them towards it. The pack, trembling in dismay, with wildly-glaring eyes looked, now at the fire blazing from the pit, now at the face of their master; then, seized, as seemed, by the infection of his madness, started, and bounding forward, straight in the face of the flame, straight through the scorching heat, plunged headlong into the open throat of the hell before them. Their tyrant tarried not behind; but with a cry—the cry in wild repeat of that with which he used to cheer them in the chase—followed on their track and rushing to its brink flung him after them into the burning hole! The fires of the furnace died out, and were never kindled again. Its stack—the tumbled ruins of it are still to be seen, the rugged heap feathered over with ferns and twined about with vines; but the scene around, so animated once, is one of desolation now. No call of hunter nor answering bark of hound is heard to awaken the echoes among the hills, and the fox seeks its hole and hides secure under the very hearthstone of the home of its old pursuer.



Satisfied by the success which attended the first working of the 'Alliance,' that furnaces could be run to advantage, John Probst, two years later, decided to build another. He selected for its seat a spot on Laurel Run, a branch of the Loyal Hanna, to be nigh to the 'public road' that led to Philadelphia, soon, by recent act of Assembly, to be converted into a turnpike, out of the growing commerce along which he hopefully expected to command a profitable custom. Several years later Gen. Arthur St. Clair, at the close of his term as Governor of the North-Western Territory, erected a third plant—the 'Hermitage,' near Ligonier. These were unsuccessful ventures, both of them, and after a brief and barren career, were abandoned. But the new industry once started was not to be stayed by the stifling of the first adventurers in it. If these, trying, had failed, so much the worse for them indeed, but that was no reason why others should not try again and prosper. Others did try—kept on trying. Down one might go,—as, in fact, earlier or later he was pretty sure to—but no sooner dropped he than two were up to take his place. So went the losses, so came the gains.



Two considerations ruled in determining upon the site for a furnace; it was not only important to have it near as possible to its source of ore-supply, but it was all-essential that it should be within convenient reach of the water-power to run it. Grounds were selected always, therefore, that lay close to natural falls, or rapids that, already half-choked with rock, could easily be dammed, in shallow rivers, such as the Youghiogeny and the Cheat; or, when other choice had to be made, on the banks of creeks or runs—any stream with flow enough in it, even though but for three months in the year, to turn a wheel. Ore was obtained by the process known as ‘benching’; that is, by digging deep down through the soil and shoveling bare the bed in which it lay. The grounds thus handled, left ridged and pitted all over by the clayey and slaty up-castings, were unfitted for cultivation, and, overgrown in time by hawthorns, black-berry bushes, wild indigo and morning-glories, became spots select for rabbits to look to for refuge, quails for cover and snakes for hiding-places, but fit for nothing else. Wood for charcoal and stone for lime the region abounded in, and convenience only was consulted as to where kilns for the one and pits for the other





should be placed. The latter were shifted from post to post, following at measured distances the chopper, as leaving behind, one after another, low mounds of black ashes to mark where they had stood, he cut his way deeper and deeper into the forest.

Work on all hands, from the manager down to the cart-mule driver was attended to in the easy, indolent, careless way common to the time. The store-keeper would suspend his proper business at any moment to swap jack-knives, match 'coppers' or play at checkers with a customer. The black-smith would drop hammer and tongs, and out forthwith on call, come when it might, to pitch horse-shoes with the cobbler, or any other challenger, on the green by the road-side. The manager was one of a kind with his men. Had he a visitor—and singularly happy was he when he had—his all of time and attention were at the comer's command. Did he take of choice to horse-back exercise, and would it please him, an hour's, two hours', ten hours' ride to—anywhere; Dumonville's Grave, Delaney's Cave, Ohio Pyle Falls, the White Rocks where Polly Williams was betrayed and murdered?—the leaders from a team would be unhitched any moment, and the



driver given a holiday, to provide canterers for the excursion. Inclined he to a quieter and less wearisome diversion?—it was a sacrifice of no moment to blow out the furnace and drain off the dam—stop the whole establishment—so that he might enjoy a fore-noon (if he did not tire of it sooner), wading in the mud to fish for eels—and to catch water-snakes. These were privileges of pleasure which business was bound to respect. The furnaces, had they been diligently worked, might have done better, but as it was they could not well have done worse. A ton and a half of metal was considered a fair day's yield; two tons was wealth to the proprietor; three tons embarrassed him with riches. And yet the product in total was enough, quite enough to meet all the call there was for it. The market to be supplied was not extensive, and the uses to which iron was applied, though various, were small and insignificant. The remainder over the larger part delivered in its raw state to the molder, was passed under the tilt-hammer and rolled into bars and rods. In other forms than these it was seldom inquired for. The blacksmith was the buyer-in-chief—in only, in fact, it might be said, since both rods and bars underwent their last handling



to fit them for their uses, on his anvil. His shops, except the far-between few set up for the accommodation of farmers in off-the-road and out-of-the-way neighborhoods, were planted along the turnpikes; for, since his main occupation was to shoe horses, and mend broken, or re-place worn out, tires, or other gear pertaining to wagons, here, on these inviting highways, the grand journey-courses of trade and of travel, were to be found the stands to catch him custom and bring him profit.

The first rolling-mill erected in the West—in the United States in fact—was built in 1817, at Plumsock, Fayette County, a few miles back in the woods from Brownsville, on the Monongahela River; located there so as to be within convenient capturing-reach of the blacksmith shops along the line of the National road leading to Cumberland. Two years later (1819), the second in order, but the first of Pittsburg proper's own, was planted; exactly where, or by whom, who knows? The pair lived their day—a short, unsunny one—then passed away; and so hath 'the iniquity of oblivion blindly scattered her poppy,' that recollection is lost, almost, of the fact of either ever having been—even in Plumsock. In 1820 a third es—





tablishment, where scythes and sickles were made, was started. Scythes and sickles paid as far as they went, and they went as far as they could go; but meadows and fields, to reap and to mow, were not over many, and harvesters not caring to carry more than one tool at a time, the demand was soon supplied, and ceased. H. S. Spang, a young man of the town, sagacious, skillful, enterprising, believing that there was a might-be of promise in the working of iron that never in fact as yet had been, and eager to prove it, saw here his opportunity. He bought (1828) at a bargain from the disappointed scythe and sickle-maker his mill; cleaned out its interior; re-furnished it with the new, necessary machinery; began to roll bar iron from blooms, and so established a business which was to last on and on; not always flourishing indeed—for hard times came, again and again, that were sorely trying—but never failing; and which, under ownership and control of Spang, Chalfant & Co., his successors, still lives to hold place prominent among the leading in its line of industry in the city.

The iron trade, through whole decades of its earlier history, had to pass through such sieges of tribulation that the wonder is it should have



survived the ordeal at all. Disaster followed disaster, failure failure, ruin ruin, in fast and frightful succession. Furnaces were built, run, and kept running, long as out of purses and promises to pay could be squeezed the means; but both had their bottom, and that reached—sooner or later it was reached, always—down went the furnace, and down went the master. Mills cost less to build and to man, and yet they fared no better. Of the six first erected (down to 1824), save one—Dr. Peter Shoenberger's, the 'Juniata,'—all, overtaken by a like fate with the furnaces, are gone; clean gone, with not even a ruin left to mark where they stood. Indeed it could not well have been otherwise. The business had been gone into prematurely and on much too wide a scale. The temptation, to be sure, was great, iron in its finished forms commanding prices that seemed to offer safest assurance of success. But half of what was made in the crude was more than enough to cast all the pots and kettles that house-wives wanted, and shoe all the horses, and rim the wheels of all the wagons on the roads. By so much, then, the trade was overdone, and having to carry unrelieved, year in and year out, on their shoulders



the other half, no wonder that the backs of the bearers before long were broken.

Pittsburg, then, did not look to derive either a present or a future benefit of extraordinary account to herself from her iron. It was a good thing to have, undoubtedly ; and so was whisky ; and so was salt. But goodness is not greatness ; *that*, her high ambition, the city expected to achieve through her commerce—her canal-boats and her steamers ; not to have it thrust upon her by her manufactures. Not at all ; and small reason had she to. The growth of the industry—that, the chief of all, which was to prove her making, though she did not know it,—was slow ; so slow. The seven mills she had in 1825 (the seventh, the ‘Sligo,’ erected in that year), had, in 1829, increased by two. Still other two were added during the next eleven years, but two were lost, leaving no gain. The fourteen years following enlarged the list by four ; thus constituting a total, in 1850, of but thirteen. A beggarly baker’s dozen, these, in the estimate of to-day ; able, at most, to employ the services of but twenty-five hundred hands, and to show for their work at the end of a year, their lean sixty thousand tons of bars and nails ; no more, and nothing else—bars and nails ! But,





like as happened to certain thirteen other distressed plants of different order and older date, taxed long and tried by obstructions and embarrassments as they had been, a Revolution was to be; a day, glorious, of deliverance to come—and its dawn was at hand.

The fact had got, at length, to be realized that iron could be applied to other uses than for hoop-ing wheels and shoeing horses—than for casting pots and molding kettles. Bridges, it was found, could be built with it; houses could be framed of it, and of it, wonderful! mighty ships, to float the water—throwing the miraculous achievement of the prophet of old in the shade, who caused the axe to swim,—could be constructed. Then—In 1812 claim had been writ by one Oliver Evans, a Keely crook-stick of the day, that “a steam-engine could be made (he would wager \$3,000 on it), that on a good level railway would run *fifteen miles an hour.*” It took years to bring the incredulous to stop laughing and start to thinking, that possibly, after all, there might be a something of method in Oliver’s madness, and to put it to trial. At last they did. It stood the test; surpassing far what had been predicted of it, to the triumphant vindication of the old visionary, and



the confusion of his revilers. Rail,—to the superseding of all other, it was a fixed certainty now—were to be *the* roads of the country. To lay and equip them would call for enormous supplies of material. The rush upon the trade to meet the new demand, told upon the markets. Iron jumped at once into brisk request. Tons of it were wanted where pounds had been a drug before. The little ‘smelting pots’ stuck scatteringly in away-off woods, to meet the exigency were too insignificant, too remote. Stacks of larger hold had to be; and in the city, at home with the factories they were to feed. And so they presently were. The first erected (1859), was the ‘Clinton’ (Graff, Bennett & Co.); the twin ‘Elizas’ (Laughlin & Co.), and the two ‘Shoenbergers’ (Shoenberger, Blair & Co.) following next; the former in 1861, the latter in 1865. The daily out-put of the ‘Clinton’ was something over 40 tons; of the ‘Eliza’s,’ each, twice, and of the ‘Shoenberger’s’ together, a little over three times, as much more. The total yield (daily) of the five amounted to 337 tons. This looked promising, very; so do blossoms in the May-days; but blossoms are blossoms—and so are promises. For several years, thence on, no farther progress



was made. The outside limit of wanted supply seemed to have been reached. Not that production was neck-and-neck up with the necessities of the time—far from it; but dregs of the dull leaven of the old lump of slow-goingness were still left; business was not urged; masters of furnaces and mills were content with what they were doing, and the concerned all around, satisfied with the good they had, did not care to strive for better. Then there were competitors now elsewhere in the field: wide-awakes, who, not having chances in equal, at all, still met the lack and more than made up the difference by what they owned and exerted in skill and enterprise. It was a time of ticklish moment to Pittsburg. The outlook was not encouraging. Failing for so long to raise herself above where the ‘Elizas’ and the ‘Shoenbergers’ had placed her, it seemed as though she had reached her height—a height with no higher beyond it—and that on the dead level there she was destined to stick. But heaven had appointed for her a loftier fortune, and the Melchior, the IRON KING, elected to lift her to it, his due time arrived, appeared.





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Among the immigrants brought by ships from across the sea in 1847, was one, a worthy Scotchman, a damask-weaver, of the name of CARNEGIE, who, wandering Westward in search of a home, found one to his choice at length, on a low-lying street in the 'Bottom' down by the river, in Allegheny. Mr. Carnegie brought with him a son, called ANDREW; a flaxen-haired, blue-eyed boy, not yet quite entered upon his teens. His parents saw in Andrew a lad of more than common wit, and to improve it, as far as means and opportunity permitted, had him placed in charge of a school-master while yet in Scotland, who taught him in the rudiments of arithmetic and Latin; the only training, under the birch, he ever received. For riper education thereafter, the world was to be his school and experience his instructor. In the one, under stern discipline of the other, he tasked and toiled; toiled and tasked—and waited to be rewarded. Reward, of the wanted sort, was slow to come; so slow that his mother—a woman of sterling worth, from whom he inherited the virtues, those, the bright particular, that shine conspicuous most in his character—despaired at last of its coming at all.



“Andy,” then one day said she, ‘better gie ither ganging the gae-by; tak’ to loom and go ca’ the shuttle content, e’en like the faither afore ye. It’s a slow trade but a ser’ing; and biding for a chancier ye may come by a waur.”

“Never you fret about that, mother,” replied Andy gaily. “Cheer up, for where there’s a will there’s a way, and—don’t forget it—you’ll have your coach and your four-in-hand for a fly through old Scotland yet, before you die.”

A time came when the Western Union Telegraph Company wanted a messenger boy. Andy applied for the situation, and got it. The position was one a little lower than he had been hoping for, but it was a beginning; an opening with a prospect before it, and that was enough. The short rests he had in the office between turns at message-carrying—rests such as the bee finds, between flights, in the flowers where the hidden sweets are—he improved; attentive to the click of the operator’s key, to seize the secret of its signaling and to catch the trick of the touch that did it. Soon mastered, these mysteries, he became an operator himself. Thos. A. Scott, Superintendent of the Western division of the Pennsylvania Railroad, wanting a clerk, saw in Andy, who as a



messenger boy had first attracted his notice, the person for the place, took him up and put him in it. Promotion was quick to follow. Scott's advancement, which presently came about, to a higher post in his company's service, left his place open, and the new secretary, not long after he had been well-settled in his chair, was appointed to supply the vacancy. The vision, shadowy and vague erewhile, of the coach and the four-in-hand, in the far-off prospect began to take shape and look like real. Having reached about the ultimate of what he could hope to reach—his rope's end—in this field of adventure, his unresting ambition longed for some range of broader scope, where his energies might find full space for exercise, and he be whole free to use them; as, though silken the chain and golden the collar that held him, he was not now. What he wanted, looking around for it, he saw—in iron. To melt it from the ore, to labor it, then to finish it into shape for use, was the work to take hold of. True he was without experience in the art; knew practically nothing about it; but what of that? The lack could be supplied; not, perhaps, to satisfy entirely, but to do—until he learned. The move duly considered, was resolved upon.





He resigned his position on the rail-road; took to him three young men of spirit akin to his own; with them formed a company—the ‘Union Iron Mills’—and started upon his new career.

Business of the new company began with the building of two rolling mills. These, while of fair capacity, were not above even with others of their class, but answered serviceably as training-places, or preparatory schools, wherein to educate and qualify for operations on the grander scale contemplated at first conceiving of the enterprise. Graduating day for that in time came around. Novices at the trade were finished master-workmen at length—fit to grapple with the herculean project; and at it they went.

Furnaces as a first essential to the scheme, were to be provided. Accordingly (1872) ground was broken, builders were set to work, and the ‘Lucy No. 1,’ a stack of unprecedented dimensions, and affording a yield never before equaled, was erected. But Lucy No. 1, with all her bearing ability could not deliver—had not the womb to hold—more than half the supply of pigs needed to feed the mills. Then, a little later on (1876), a companion to her, ‘Lucy No. 2,’ her like in height and size, was built. The pair





turned out their nearly, if not altogether, four hundred tons of metal between sun-rise and sun-rise. The 'Elizas' were outdone two to one. Stripped of their laurels and shorn of their glory, the queens — they — that had been, retired before the sovereigns that were, to take place down among commoners of their class, as they might find it. Alas, for the Elizas! — With its factories and its furnaces great grew to be the 'Union;' so great that in it the Work which its projector had in plan might have been esteemed as perfected, and that there it was to end. It was only fairly started. Finishing was yet to follow; but the time for it was now on — close on — and, in the erection of the 'Edgar Thomson Steel Works' (1879) it came.

Iron for the laying of tracks on railroads, thus far, while to the greater extent furnished by mills at Johnstown, Harrisburg and Scranton, was obtained in liberal supply from England. The best — the home-made, worked from common native ores — was for its purpose bad enough; the imported still worse. Rails rolled from it, too weak to resist, would flatten, fray at the edges, and not rarely, especially in frosty weather, snap short off under friction of the car-wheels. Accidents,



more or less damaging always, usually disastrous, were, in consequence of these wearings and breakings, of frequent, almost every-day occurrence. There was one way by which this unsatisfactory condition of affairs could be corrected, and only one. Tougher material must be used in the making of rails: steel must take the place of iron. Mr. Carnegie was not long in catching hold of that fact. But steel was steel, and how to get it at a price the roads could afford to pay, was the question. The problem was a puzzling one, but fortunately, through Bessemer's ingenuity, it was solved at last. That fact settled, Mr. Carnegie saw that the opportunity he had been waiting for was come; seized it, improved it, and soon was ready to test the new process, and to practically initiate an industry which was to prove to Pittsburgh an acquisition of priceless value, and to its founder a god-send of fortune and of fame.

The plant of the Edgar Thomson Steel Works (Carnegie, Bros. & Co.), consisted at first of three blast furnaces—the 'A,' 'B,' and 'C'—and a mill for working up their metal, much the greater part of which was rolled into rails. The roads tried the rails, found that they were good and became customers crying in their demand for them. The



three furnaces did their best but were not able to supply the want. Two others in 1881—the ‘D’ and ‘E’—were added, and shortly after, still other two—the ‘F’ and ‘G.’ Feeding these furnaces—they had ravenous appetites, which to satisfy and not impair digestion, required to be judiciously catered to—caution had to be observed in the ordering of their fare. Ores could be had for the digging at home in any wanted quantity, but they were not of untainted purity, and to qualify them for use had to be worked in combination with certain foreign others. These were sought for far and near, and brought in from wherever they could be found; from mines in Michigan, in Missouri, in Arkansas, in Georgia, in Virginia, and—across the Atlantic—in Sweden, in Spain, in Greece, in Elba, and from the shores of the Nile in Egypt. As multiplied the furnaces so proportionally widened and enlarged the industry to which they were contributory. Department after department was added to the mill. Operations no longer confined to the rolling of rails were extended to the making of bars, beams, bolts, plates, sheets—furnishings complete, in fine, of whatever form or size, from the massive most to the minutest, used in the construction of bridges,





boats, buildings. Wherever a want was, or where, not being, was invented to be, which steel or iron could supply, the machinery and the men were placed to supply it. Thus enterprise succeeded enterprise, each new labor completed followed close behind by a newer begun. The Edgar Thomson's one hundred and thirty-three acres of ground, expected when purchased to afford ample space for a lifetime to come at least, was soon, after every foot of it had been put to use, found to be too small to accommodate its business. A new field, the 'Homestead,' already planted, but with large room left for still wider occupation, was secured; and so the point of progress was gained at which—only full fairly under headway at that—the Works stands to-day. As to the degree of that let us see.

The premises of the company cover collectively an area of two hundred and fifty-three acres. On these there are nine blast-furnaces—the Lueys and Alpha-Betas—which consume daily three thousand tons of ore, two thousand seven hundred tons of coke, and nine hundred tons of lime; rendering a return of one thousand eight hundred tons of metal. To receive in the raw and deliver in the wrought these,



involves, with other accessories, the handling of some nine thousand tons of matter. For the conveying of the same to and from the docks (private) on the rivers, and the depots on the several railways, thirty-three locomotives, five hundred cars, and twenty-six miles, all told, of track to run them on, are used. To do the work on the company's properties, in the mills and at the offices, holds in constant employment, a force of thirteen thousand men. The world of fact has its works and its workers in iron, the world of fable its; but out of all the real of the one, or the mythical of the other, can there be found a mate to compare with this? It was a labor, the thought of old time was, possible but to a god, to forge his leven-bolts for Jove. Our Hephæstus, mortal born, would turn them out, of size to suit, fast as the Thunderer could brew the storms to play them in, nor think it a marvel of achievement either.

With the building of the first Lucy (1872), started a new epoch in the history of the iron trade in Pittsburg. During that single year the number of furnaces increased by four. After these, at intervals, one and another followed until now the list consists of twenty-one. In '72 the



yearly out-put of metal amounted to one hundred and twenty-three thousand tons; the year just ended, when its results are figured out, will show a product of over one million tons. Add to this the metal imported, old rails, scraps, &c., and a total will appear of quite as much more.

For the conversion of this mass of material into merchantable wares, the town is stacked all over with mills; mills that work, and article, annually: two thousand four hundred tons into tacks; twenty-five thousand tons into nails; thirty-three thousand tons into spikes; two thousand tons into chains; fifteen thousand tons into wire for fences; one hundred and fifty thousand tons into pipes; eighteen thousand tons into steel springs; twenty-two thousand tons into agricultural implements; one hundred and fifty thousand tons into castings; and—who can tell how many tons?—into locomotives, steam engines, structural supplies, rails for railroads, and such-like extensively-employed and ponderously-wrought products. The market for these, in the general, extends the land over from Maine to Mexico, from Florida to farthest North on the shore of its opposite ocean: in the particular, from Canada, continentally wide, to Chili—to Japan. Waters,





like as of the Connecticut, the Susquehanna, the Ohio, the Missouri, the Mississippi, and, away on down, of the rivers of Brazil are arched by our bridges; farms checkering the broad plains of the West, are fenced by our wires; railways that connect the marts and conduct the commerce of both Americas, are run by our engines. So — with all besides of whatever in its various branches demand invites and the hands of forty thousand workers can do to supply it—so moves the trade.

It was a fanciful, improbable imagination, that of the boy Andy, with which he used to flatter himself, and comfort the heart of his fond, if sometimes doubting, old mother, of a time on in the times to be, when in a coach and with a four-in-hand they should have their fly through old Scotland together, and yet it came: trifling enough in itself to look at when it came, but as a fore-tokening in the boy of what was, following, to come in the bolder schemes and grander progresses of the man, of significant account. The boy had looked but to the improving of his own lowly fortune, and—as was natural, since, then, it was all his world to him—that of his humble





household: the man, with a broader and more liberal thought, to the building up of a city, and the benefiting of its people—towards which, from the standing, visible proofs of what has been, judge, as may be judged, of what is in reservation to be done.



## III.

AS in the treatment of iron fire is an always indispensable agent, each new handling of the substance in its altering passage from furnace to finishing-shop necessitating a new heating, it is of first importance to workers in it that fuel, good, cheap and plenty of it, should be conveniently procurable. Pittsburg, in that particular, has been peculiarly favored. Wood for charcoal, in the charcoal days, could be had from wild lands lying all around where furnaces were—too rugged and thin of soil to be of value for any other use—at a cost of little more than was paid for the cutting. When, in time, the accessible portions of these forest ranges were chopped bare, the consumers had for other recourse to turn to, their coal. The change was not one that, left to choice, they would, indeed, have chosen; they preferred their carbon as they did their beef, in the fresh, freshly roasted, rather than in the stale, hard dry; but it was carbon all the same—food good enough for the furnaces, when they got used to it, and



they did not complain. They did not complain, because there was the comforting feature about it that famine from failure was not to be feared. There was no chance of that. The supply was more than abundant, and not to be exhausted. Bettering of advantage could not be asked—could not be expected; unless the impossible should be proved feasible, and it were found that fires might be kept up *without fuel at all*. And that was to be; without the asking, against the expecting—Providence had so, wonderfully, ordered—that was to be.

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That down in the Earth's bosom, where its lungs are, there dwells an air, of kin but not of kind to that we breathe; that it rests there as it has rested for ages, sealed up tight and fast; that it is highly inflammable, and that it burns with a heat hotly suggestive of the hell it seems to start from, are facts not newly come to light only now. Guyasutha, the Mingo, could have told of it a hundred and fifty years ago. It was not so hermetically sealed in, but that here and there, through chance crannies, it could find escape, not noticeable, because signless, on dry surfaces, but easily to be detected in still pools





along the courses of streams. So, after he had sunk the warrior in the tradesman, Cornplanter, the Senecan, dipping blankets to gather petroleum from his vats in Oil Creek, used to see it spring from the sand and rise bubbling up through the water. When, later, the licks along shore of the Allegheny, indicated that salt might be found down under ground, and explorers began to bore for it, farther, stronger, and rather startling evidence of it appeared. The outer shell of its stony casing pierced through, a freer vent than the cramped one of a crack in the rocks, was afforded, and out it came, not in bubbles, such as a boy might blow of suds from the bowl of a pipe, but in a continuous, gushing flow.

Now and then when a livelier vein was tapped, it rushed so as to lift high the water with it out of the hole. Lewis Peterson struck such a well on his grounds near Tarentum; and when innocents from abroad came in, as with the touch of a match he lit the jet and up it flashed, a mingled fountain of fire and water, imagine their astonishment at sight of the wonder! That was forty years ago, and still the well flows, and still it will burn, put the lucifer to it, as freely as ever.



Later again, when petroleum began to be sought for, and wells were drilled below salt-water level, deep down through the underlying rocks, a discovery followed that far outwondered the wonder at Tarentum. The steel bit of the driller, driven on, hit straight at last the 'Sand,' the secret hold of the mysterious air, when, a door of escape thus opened, like the wind let loose from the bag of Æolus, out it flew. Not silently and temperately, like as from the 'Peterson,' but with a roar as of thunder, and a rush as of a cyclone, out it flew—flew, lifting on its wing as it rose, through fifteen hundred feet of hole, the drill, lightly, as though its three thousand pounds of solid iron were but of feather weight; and like a feather flung it up and tossed it out at top. Fired, as it flashed high overhead, it was a sight to see—the narrow, faint-blue jet, scarcely visible at bottom, deepening into a broad red blaze as it mounted; the stalk of the shoot throwing out its branches, the branches their leaves—snapped from their stems, at times, ere more than formed, and whirled curling off in air to burn for an instant, instantly then to vanish; the 'plant,' its full height reached, opening out at top into flower—a gigantic, flagrant, flaming



flower, such as Proserpine might grow in her hot-bed to pluck, when of a mind to, for a lover—Pluto, if you please—to sport in his button-hole;—a famous sight to see! And that was about all that was made of it—a spectacular oddity; a something curious to look at; something la!-ful to admire; like a comet, or an Aurora-borealis, or a Star of Bethlehem; that, and only that. But if all that was, it was not all that could be, not all that was destined to be, made of it; although somewhat long might be the waiting ere the making came about.

Among others, not few, of the burning springs long known about, is one in Tupper Creek, a small stream running near by Westfield, a thriving town in Chautauqua County, New York, and emptying half a mile further on into Lake Erie. In 1828 Thomas B. Campbell, a citizen of Westfield, received authority from Washington to erect a light-house at the entrance of Barcelona Harbor, close upon which the town stands. Mr. Campbell was a man, one of your considering, calculating kind, who could indeed enjoy a thing of beauty for its beauty, but who, having an eye to that, had a pair of them on the look-out always for the discovery of some secret property or other,



good for use, he might suspect to lie under it. His job of the light-house completed, passing one night by the Burning Spring, he paused to look at it, and looking, began to think: here was that, running to waste, which the light-house wanted; which it must have, and which it would pay money to get. Was it possible to——? And he kept on thinking, and with his pair of eyes kept on looking, until he thought and saw it out. It was possible.

Presently, then, he forwarded a letter to Government containing a proposal for supplying the light-house with light. The proposal was accepted, and the Judge (Mr. Campbell was an Associate Judge in the court of his county) set to work to carry out his part of the contract. He purchased an empty fish-barrel from his grocer, sawed it in two, and placing one of the halves, like a hat, over the head of the fountain, made of it a receiver to gather in and hold the vapor. Pump-logs, jointed end to end together, a mile's length of them, were laid, a channel of conveyance between fountain and light-house opened, and the work was done. The Court knew itself; its judgment was sustained, confirmed. The vanity of the Burning Spring was proved to





be not all a vanity ; there was gold in its glitter. Tupper Creek, indeed, lost its attraction—its light, alas ! hid under a bushel—but Barcelona had its beacon.

For thirty years, with a blaze ‘not quenched day nor night,’ and that never abated, the beacon burned ; for thirty years longer it would have gone on burning, only that then, the Lake Shore Railroad coming in to steal away trade from the ships, there was nothing to harbor, and the port was abandoned. But the light, put out at the light-house, was not so to be put down. Dismissed the civil service, it was taken into the social ; where it still holds, doing duty in the public schools and in the churches ; in houses and on the streets, and only *not*, where Government that paid for it liberally enough to the father, erewhile keeper of the light-house, neglects ungraciously now to furnish it to his son—its only representative the town has—in the Post-office.

One would suppose that after having thus been tried and proved, the new illuminant would have sprung into favor, and been generally adopted, at once. So perhaps it might, only that the other springs known of were away too far from the Lake, down inland, on creeks and rivers where



there were no harbors, consequently no light-houses to beacon, and where the half-red white men, and the half-white red men inhabiting, lit their cabins with pine-knots, when lighted at all, and neither looked nor longed for anything better. This state of affairs, however, could not last always. Light, perhaps, might not soon be in request, among the thinly-scattered settlements there, but its co-existent element—heat—would, and the time was surely to be, when so generous a contributor to it must come into demand.

When the discovery of petroleum in the Upper Allegheny region came about, in 1859, borers after it were much annoyed by the forcible entry into their wells of this villainous vapor, interfering as it did, often quite seriously, with their operations. To catch and convey it off, out of their way, as by contrivance they at length managed to do, was all they cared about. Once in a while an operator would introduce and use it in his engine-room; once in a while convey it through a pipe into his shanty, to heat the pot and the pan he boiled his coffee, and fried his eggs and bacon in; once in a while, when the well was near the tavern, the blacksmith-shop, and the two or three saloons they called a town, tube it to the front of one or



the other, so that in the night customers from the neighboring oil-fields, or chance travelers belated on the road, might see where the town was, and be guided to it. With these its use began—for fifteen years to find no improvement, to make no advance.

It happened, then, that John W. Chalfant went forth a-journeying one day into a land, in Butler County, where these flaming geysers were, and where he saw them play. Like the Chautauqua judge—he did not know the judge; had never heard tell of the Burning Spring at Westfield, nor of the light-house at Barcelona Harbor, nor of the pump-logs; but, of a same shrewdly-observant habit—like the judge he looked, and thought; thought, now of those great fountains of fire, wasting their fragrance on the desert air of Butler shire; now of Spang, Chalfant & Co.'s iron mills, where what was worthless here, would come into such fine service there. Then he too, like the judge, began to wonder: Was it possible to——? at end, like the judge, to resolve: it was possible. To make up his mind about it, was to put his hand to it. There was a well there, at Lardentown, where he was, that would suit for what he wanted, and could be had. It was





secured. Rights of way across farms and cranberry fields were obtained; trenches were dug, and a duct of solid iron laid—from its pylorus at Lardentown reaching over a stretch of seventeen miles to its vent under the boilers of the ‘Etna Mills’ at Pittsburg. The experiment succeeded perfectly; the vapor, in spite of the rubs and resistances met from the twists and turns in the conductor, darting through at the rate of a mile to the minute, and with no appreciable diminution to its volume. This was in the Autumn of 1875—twelve years and more ago; but the fires first lighted then are burning still, and the throat that lent the breath to kindle them into life, still blows to keep them living, with a force as vigorous as ever.

No clearer proof of the fitness for use of *Natural Gas*—so, now, after this first real taming and training of it to service, the strange air got to be called—could be offered; and yet the force of it was not felt.—Nor, until the appointed time should bring the appointed man—him, the Belt-hazar—FIRE KING—last of the Royal Three—for the work, was it to be; but that was at hand.



When, in 1856, GEORGE WESTINGHOUSE, JR., a lad ten years old, was taken over from Central Bridge, Schoharie County, his birth-place, to Schenectady, N. Y., and put under training at the high-school there, he was, like other well-behaved boys, regular in his attendance, mindful of his lessons, and as ready to intelligently respond when put to question in the task-room as were any, the promptest, besides among his class-mates. But the regulation hours at the high-school were not his exclusive ones out of the day's dozen devoted to learning. In fact it might be said of him that his off-hours were the hours when he was chiefly on, and that he really was most at school when not at school at all. His father had been the builder, and was master of the 'Schenectady Agricultural Works,' an establishment of wide repute, and that lent largely towards furnishing its fame for enterprise to the city. Thither when out from under his tutor's charge, and at liberty to dispose of his time as pleased him, it was his custom to resort; not that he had no heart, nor hand, for sports such as were the delight of his fellows,—for he could handle a bat and pull an oar to fair sharing of honors at both with the



best of them—but that there, prying into the mysteries of machines, and accustoming him to the art of making them, or improving them when made—working for pastime with the workers for profit—he found entertainment more to his choice. Old hands, graduates in experience at the trade, as they witnessed the readiness with which he took to his tools, and the skill with which he manipulated them, wondered; and still their wonder grew, when, ere long, they saw him put the finishing touches to a steam-engine—a work, in piece and in whole, all of his own modeling and building, and he a boy not yet in his teens. He continued on under training at these his two schools, the preceptive and the practical, thus, until he felt himself old enough, at sixteen, to take part in the war. After two years—the last two of the Rebellion—spent in active service in the army, he returned to resume his forsaken place in the Works; to take up his tools, and start in afresh to scheme, and plan, and experiment as before.

Among his contrivances was one particularly promising—a ‘reversible steel frog,’ (‘frog’ corrupted from ‘frush’; an iron picce thus named from its resemblance to the horny growth, so



called, in the sole of a horse's hoof, and used in the angles at crossings of rail-roads, to prevent wheels from jumping the track), to arrange to best advantage for the manufacture and sale of which was the consideration that, in 1868, brought him to Pittsburg. This was his first successful stroke at invention. A next, and more important one, followed. Reading his newspaper one morning, a letter from a traveler in Italy fell under his eye, containing reference to the Mont Cenis tunnel, then in process of excavation, with a mention of 'compressed air' as the power used in the prosecution of the work. The thought flashed on him—Could not the same force be brought as well to work the brakes on a train of cars? the necessity of an appliance for that purpose, other and better than the primitive and imperfectly-operative one in use, having long been felt. His one or two friends consulted did not favorably consider, in fact were disposed to make light of, the idea. To think of controlling the movements, the startings and the stoppings, of a train by means of an India-rubber tube, hung and strung, like a Bologna sausage, along the cars' bottoms! It was absurd. But he tried it nevertheless; tried it—





and the 'Westinghouse Air-brake' was what came of it.

His next important adventure was one that turned up, as things, especially rare things, usually do turn up, by accident.

When petroleum was discovered in the new fields near Pittsburg, some three years ago, Mr. Westinghouse, interested like the rest of our local mankind in the finding, was led to believe that, possibly, the fluid might be had at home as well as in adjoining Washington County, if one were only to light on the right place and bore for it. He decided to test the matter; had the timbers prepared, and proceeded to plant a derrick at a chosen spot on his own private grounds in an upper ward of the city. The drill was started (December, 1883), and at a depth of 1560 feet a vein was struck, not of oil as was anticipated, but—what had not been counted upon as among contingencies—of gas. Gas was not what he was after, not what he wanted; but there it was, and now that he had it, not inclining to let it run to waste, he began to consider what could be made of it. To resolve that question to his mind, time for reflection was necessary.

Meanwhile borers, busy as beetles, were else-



where abroad and at work. Derrick after derrick started up; well after well started down. Hill-sides and bottoms lying along rivers and creeks, wherever creeks and rivers ran, were perforated all over with the one, while, thick-planted, whole-seen in fields, half-hid in woods, tall and ghostly, like obelisks in skeleton, towered on every hand the bare-ribbed shafts of the other. In the Washington County district success could be depended upon. A main artery of the fluid seemed to be seated there, which was sure to flow with every probe of the driller's lance. Outside of that favored spot was outside of what enriched it. The oleo-marginal line appeared to be reached, with no beyond to it, at the line of the county. But searches spent in this outer territory were not to be without their findings—if not of oil, of that which was to prove its no less precious sister-substitute—gas. If the earth, there, had no womb for the one, it had a stomach charged, ready to burst, with the other. As hole after hole was chiseled down, gush after gush of it sprang up. Strike where one would, he was sure to hit it. Taking fire, as all were quite certain to, the flames would shoot up twenty, thirty, forty feet in air; their light, broad-cast, at night, out-



shining the moon's, and paling that of the dawn at morning. To its field, and to its yield, there was no limit.

These new discoveries happened just in time for Mr. Westinghouse's purpose. Meditating over his 'strike,' a scheme had occurred to him so fair of promise as to almost persuade him to, at once, adopt and put it through. But two questions arose that caused him to hesitate: Could a supply of gas, enough for the purpose projected—calling for more than he had—be found, and, found, would it hold out? The result of experiments at Canonsburg (not within the oil belt) in Washington County, Murrysville in Westmoreland, Baden in Beaver, and Sewickley in Allegheny (all around and within a radius of thirty miles of Pittsburg), settled the one point, and the broad extent of the bearing-area thus indicated, gave sufficient assurance of the other. Spang, Chalfant & Co. had been content to provide for themselves alone. Mr. Westinghouse proposed the more comprehensive work of concentrating the out-put of a sufficient number of wells and supplying all the factories, and all the families besides, in the two cities. Could the factories, and the families, be induced to use it? Not if





they had to act for themselves and be their own carriers—for men used to old ways, like dogs, are lazy to learn new—but let it be delivered at their doors—offered to them without the going after—and they would. His project ripe for execution, decisive action followed. The capital stock of the “Philadelphia Company,” to secure the only thing of value left to it—its charter—was bought up, the old office at Philadelphia closed, and a new one “for the purpose of conducting a Natural Gas business,” opened at Pittsburg. The necessary authority from Councils was obtained, and before the good people of the city well knew why, the work of trenching the streets for the laying of pipes, was begun.

It required no forcing to bring the gas into use. The good people were not only willing, they were eager to have it. Mains for its delivery could not be set fast enough to meet the urgency of dwellers along their lines, waiting to tap them. Mills, crowded, toiled night and day to supply tubes; plumbers, from earliest early to latest late of hours, to place them. A novelty first, to attract, tried, it became a necessity. House-keepers cried for it; without it would not be comforted. Owners of works that had held



dilatorily back, waiting to be served, now that they were served saw the priceless precious thing it was, and took to it greedily. The Philadelphia Company, anticipating a large patronage, had made liberal provision to meet it, but to be fully prepared for all possible contingencies, kept on adding to their lands, their mains and their fountains of supply. The work, entered upon with so much spirit, was continued with unabated activity, until now, after three years, they have to show for it, the owning, on lease and by purchase, of fifty-six thousand acres of ground, one hundred producing wells, and a plant of four hundred and fifty miles of pipe. The grounds, it will be noticed, are very moderately taxed, there being an average of but one well to five hundred and sixty acres—an area broad enough to, alone, afford more than room for the one hundred distributed over the whole. Other companies—the ‘Allegheny Heating,’ the ‘Baden,’ the ‘Chartiers Valley,’ the ‘Peoples,’ the ‘People’s Pipage’—following the lead of the Philadelphia, have since entered the field, and now contribute their share, amounting all together, to about half that of the Philadelphia, to the general service. Abundantly thus provided for, the use



of other fuel has ceased. Coal will still, indeed, hold place as heretofore in other markets, but at home its grasp is lost. The last of fires of its supplying have burned out—are whole extinguished, never to be lighted more.

The stroke of enterprise which brought to pass this result has proved to Pittsburg one of incalculable value. It has given to her that which, as rarest of the rare good things reserved of Providence for special bestowing, had the choice been hers, she would have chosen—a fire that could be trusted to do the various service required of it; to do it well, and, still more to purpose, at a low cost—as near a no-cost as possible. In all these particulars her desire has been more than met. The old fire worked to fair benefit, but at a round price to its employers. It was a ravenous consumer; ate with a greed that never was satisfied; demanded the best of food, and would ‘strike’ any instant when attempted to be run on short rations. The new needs no catering to, nor caring for; it feeds on air and helps itself; it seeks no rest, wants none, because it finds best its ease when busiest in action. Under instant and absolute control, it can be adjusted at a touch to any degree of burning—fierce, if you





will, as that of a furnace, or faint, if you like, as a taper's, lit of a night to dot the dark in a lady's chamber.

With this, the one thing only wanted for her perfect equipment, now that she has it, Pittsburg can rest content. It arms her with a power which assures to her foremost place in her domain of enterprise—a place to occupy without a rival; to hold in exclusive undivided possession, unchallengeably her own.

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Such, in the light of its fires, looking forth from my window, is what I see in that I see of the city reaching out before me. Pictures reflective of what in the hard times of its early experience it was; of its toilsome progresses; its gains in growth, in enterprise, in wealth, steadily all the time, if sometimes haltingly made. Pictures of what it is; its grounds penned in by no contracted corporate lines, but extending far, farther than eye can see, along the bottoms by the rivers, up the bordering steeps, and back at their tops away and away; its factories, furnaces, mills, thick-planted over all, and, packed in between, the dwellings of the now four hundred thousand souls





that furnish their quotas to man them. Pictures prophetic of what it is to be ; with the elements, Earth with its resources, Air, Fire, Water, with their forces, held all in bond to wait upon its bidding, and with its ministering, all-mighty Magi—its Gaspar, Melchior, Belthazar — LES TROIS ROIS—who tamed and trained them to it, alive to appoint their work and regulate their service—pictures, not to be copied, of what it is to be !



# TOM THE TINKER.



## TOM THE TINKER.

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TOM THE TINKER has achieved for himself a mention in history. Although the commotion on the waves of which he was lifted into notice was a local one, of transient duration, and in itself not specially characterized by extraordinary incident, yet the circumstances of the time imparted, and still secure to it, a deeply-felt and general interest. The country was but in the infancy of its independence; the experiment of a popular government remained to be tested; and the citizens naturally looked with eagerness toward the result of this first issue raised between Law and 'Liberty' under the new *regime*. Tom the Tinker had battled manfully, without doubt, against the king. Now that, by right of conquest, Tom was a sovereign, could he be brought, when he had no relish for it, to realize the fact that he was also a subject? That was a problem which the Whisky Insurrection was to solve.





To appreciate adequately the points involved in this seditious movement, a sketch of its progress should be anticipated by a picture of the scene of its event, of the people active in it, and of their social and domestic ways of life, as gathered from the lips of the few living witnesses left of the time.\*

Pittsburg, shortly after the close of the Revolutionary War, sustained a metropolitan relation to the greatly scattered settlements of the Western frontier. At that time it was a mere village, with a population of perhaps one thousand souls. The houses composing it were built of logs, with the exception of two—Kirkpatrick's and Neville's, which were constructed, aristocratically, of clapboards—and clustered chiefly along the Monongahela River and toward its point of junction with the Allegheny. Overgrowing the low ground in the rear of the town, and reaching along the latter-mentioned river, was the King's Orchard, consisting of about a hundred apple trees, seedlings of Norman parentage, and planted by the French during their occupancy of Fort Du Quesne.

\* At the date of the first appearance of this sketch, 'living,' these witnesses, but all, long since, dead.



Spreading from the orchard eastwardly, was a broad, vacant space, used as a race-course. Horse-racing was the favorite amusement of the people. There were those who favored bear-baiting, and others of a more gentle temper who were content with wrestling, boxing (without gloves), playing at cudgels, and the like; but horses were the ruling fancy, and this was the arena upon which their mettle was tried. Back of the race-course, at the base of Grant's Hill, and under shadow of the oaks that crowned its brow, stood the log store room, famous among traders, of Le Bat. Hither, of wont, assembled the yeomanry with their burdens of corn and rye from the scattered clearings along the valleys and uplands of the Monongahela; hither resorted the trapper with his skins of beaver and muskrat; the hunter with his hides of bear and fox and deer from the far-off regions of the upper *Al-lo-ga-nee* (the 'Beautiful,' for the title, now limited to the Ohio, applied then to the main water course that supplies it as well); and higher the Indian floated down in his canoe from *Wenango* (French) and Oil Creek, with his moc-casins, maple sugar, beeswax and his *petroleum*, all to bargain off in barter for powder, tobacco, whisky and such like needful commodities; and



Le Bat grew prosperous and purse-proud by the commerce.

The town lacked not in taverns for the accommodation of patrons. First, in point of time, was that of Black Charley, on Water Street, whose white wife (the 'Institution' existing then in Pennsylvania, too!) was famous for her table, and whose self was a model among landlords. Proud was Charley of his place and of his profession, and right good reason ruled there that he should be. Was not his house, humble as it was, the distinguished resort of the royal of the land? Had not King Shingiss patronized his premises, and swapped wampum for what it would fetch at his bar? Had not Queen Aliquippa, whose name is perpetuated on steamboats, restaurants and cigar boxes to the present day, got drunk on his liquor, sworn majestic oaths in broken English under his roof, and slept herself into soberness on the bench at his door? Had not the Demosthenes of his tribe imbibed from his pewter—perhaps from his hospitality caught inspiration, for "I appeal to any white man to say if ever he entered Logan's cabin hungry?" and so on; the effort which, under reconstruction of Jefferson's pen, more ably attempted than honestly, has crowned



him with an immortality? And GUYASUTHA, chief of the Senecas and compeer of Pontiac, too—weak, wasted old ruin of a once magnificent man, who, as well as King and Queen, had hobnobbed with Washington, drunk rum with him out of the same canteen, and by him been honored with historic mention—had he not daily, through whole seasons, crossed his threshold and quaffed of his Monongahela, wasting the time between drinks out in the sun, making bows and arrows for the town-boys, and teaching them the proper method of their use? Ay, and whether or not to the relish of Davy Duncan, a later and neighboring competitor, Charlie was not slow to plume himself upon the distinction implied by the patronage.

Then there was the inn kept by John McMaster, sign of the Black Bear, on the north-east corner of the Diamond and Market Street, where were wont to congregate the soldiers of the garrison and the tradesmen from their shops, to enjoy at his benches and over his bowls their times of stolen leisure—the oft-recurring opportunities being made none the less attractive by the presence of blind Dennis Loughy and Crowder the fiddler, who, the one with his hornpipes, and the other with his ballads about highwaymen and horse





thieves, tickled the ears of the listeners, or stirred their feet into responsive action, vastly to the common rapture, as well as to the substantial advantage of the house.

But first and foremost of all was what was called the Butler House while under the management of Patrick—familiarily Pat—on the corner of Market and Fourth Streets, near by a brick redoubt built by the British, but which, consequent upon his demise, and when conducted by his admirable relict, was better known as Molly Murphy's. The military disaster following the attack of the Miami Indians in 1791 so wrought upon her enthusiasm that she employed the services of a native artist, and had presently swinging before her premises, immensely to her satisfaction as well as to the popular admiration, a great sign illuminated with a picture, done in dashing colors, of Saint Clair's defeat—or *defate*, as the text of the original copy had it. Molly was a woman of parts, and knew how to 'keep a hotel.' Rough of manner, and perhaps more emphatic than choice in speech—the confirmed habit, at length, of a deportment assumed at first to hold the rude guests she had to deal with under proper discipline—she was, nevertheless,



generous of heart and of pure reputation. Her house was the main depot of commerce between the frontier at large and the East. Thither concentrated, principally, the traders from all along range of sunset. Thence were the goods for export forwarded to their destination, and thence the slender supplies of return freight delivered to Le Bat, Captain Wilson and the few other operators and retailers in town, or carried piecemeal away by individual country purchasers to their several homes in the wilderness. A hint as to the quality of the frequenters of its various taverns affords the readiest and most comprehensive suggestion of the general character of the inhabitants of the town.

The style of life in the country was simple in the extreme. The population was composed, almost exclusively, of Scotch-Irish—a stout and stubborn race, of plain manners, frugal habits, devoted in their clannish attachments, fantastically formalistic in their very repudiations of form, rigidly righteous in their renunciations of the world, the flesh and the devil; energetic, industrious and fearless—the character of all others befitting the pioneer, who had, literally, to hew out his farm and his home from primeval forests,



and to protect them afterward, at peril of life, from the murderous assaults of savages. The first step of the newly arrived immigrant was to fix upon a congenial neighborhood somewhere, by common preference in the valley or on the adjacent uplands of the Monongahela; the next, armed with rifle, balls, powder and tomahawk, and accompanied by a settler, to steer for such tracts in the wilds as were unclaimed, when, having stumbled upon an inviting locality, he would proceed to mark the boundaries of his self-appropriated farm. Corner trees were selected and blazed on two sides, the north and east, say, or similarly toward any other points of the compass, as the case might be, and so on, until all the angles of the property were in like manner defined. These were known as 'tomahawk improvements,' and constituted a title as valid as any deed could give. Much of the choicest property of the region is held to-day upon no better warranty. Government received no recompense for the lands thus claimed and taken.

The third movement was to build a house. This was generally accomplished in about two days. The neighbors—that is to say, the settlers within a circuit of perhaps ten or fifteen miles—





collecting together, divided themselves into gangs; one to cut logs in the forest, a second to haul them to the site selected for the proposed structure, and a third, composed of such as were skillful in the handling of an axe, to notch them, or, selecting the straightest grained, to split them into slabs or clapboards. The materials having been gathered and prepared, the logs were lifted to their places in the walls. At the proper height, some eight or ten feet from the ground, the end walls were narrowed in with every successive layer bringing the logs at the sides nearer together until the order of contraction culminated at length in a single one on the top. Over these convergent inclinations the clapboards, cut in four-feet lengths, were laid, each range overlapping the one below it, and all held in their places by 'weight-poles' laid across at proper distances, and firmly secured by wooden pins to the underlying timbers. This composed the roof. A place for a door was then cut out of one side, the logs severed for this purpose being sustained in their places by pins driven through the upright slabs which formed the door-frame. The door itself was made of split timber, and was hung and fastened with wooden hinges and a latch.



Not a nail or scrap of iron was used in all the building. At an end of the cabin another opening was made for the chimney. This was also built of logs on the outside, but close against the wall, 'chunked' and daubed with billets of wood and mortar, and lined with a few stones to protect the back and jambs from fire. When there was any other than an earthen floor, it was laid sometimes of trees split, with the bark side uppermost, and again of whole logs planted side by side, and chipped with an adze as nearly to a level as the implement and the skill with which it was wielded would admit of. A slab table, a three-legged stool or two and a bench made up the inventory of furniture. Wooden pins, varied for certain uses by bucks' horns, inserted in the wall, answered the several purposes of supports for shelves, rests for rifles, pegs for the suspension of shot-pouches, shirts, gowns, etc., and slantingly ranged at convenient distances, as a means of passage up to the hatchway opening into the loft. For this latter purpose ladders were sometimes used, the parties ascending drawing them up after them as a measure of protection. Pins of a greater length, inserted in like manner, and supported at the other end, by forked sticks resting



on the floor, the frame thus formed being overlaid with slabs, constituted their bedsteads; and yet there were cases when this approximation to luxurious use was contemptuously declined. In such instances, gumtree logs, cut the desired length, hollowed out, and half enclosed with a board at one end, were employed as a substitute. Into these, rolled out and ranged with the open end next the fire, would the members of the household crawl, and comfortably repose through the long cold nights of winter. In the morning they would be gathered up and planted, endwise, out of the way in a corner of the cabin. Many of the families were without any culinary utensils whatever, unless a pewter plate and a horn spoon should fall under that designation. They baked their johnny-cakes on a board before the fire, and their steaks of bear and venison, or their carcasses of pheasant and wild turkey (domestic fowls of any sort were unknown), on the coals. A gourd containing salt was suspended by a string against the wall, out of which the needed supplies of the precious commodity were sparingly extracted; and that, too, with inexhaustible fountains of the mineral, had they but known it, waiting to be tapped right under their feet.





For dress, the men wore hunting shirts of linsey-woolsey, with or without capes as taste inclined, and bordered among the more elegantly disposed with a fringe of some boldly contrasted color—generally red on a garment of blue, or blue on a cloth of white. These shirts were tucked in, and fastened around the loins with a raw-hide rope belt. The bosom answered the purpose of a huge pocket for storing away tow, tobacco, a flask and what not, while the belt was made to support a sheathed knife and a tomahawk. Moccasins were exclusively worn on the feet. The deer skins out of which they were wrought were tanned from the brains of the creatures from which they were stripped, it being the accepted theory of the frontier that ‘the brains of any animal is the best material to tan its own hide with.’ Their caps were made of fox-skins. Women dressed in petticoats and short gowns of the same material worn by the men. The petticoat was secured around the hips with drawing strings, the skirt of the short gown reaching below, somewhat like a sacque of the present day, and concealing the tie. They wore their hair combed up behind and massed into a sort of waterfall in front. Their hats were made of





plaited rye straw, low in the crown and broad in the brim. The better-to-do class—those worth a cow and a calf or their equivalent of a hundred acres of land—indulged occasionally in the extravagance of a substitute of woolen fabric.

The settlers were very strict in their religious observances. Services on Sunday were usually held, summer and winter, in the open air, and with no other shelter than that afforded by the trees. 'Meeting-houses,' where there were any—because of the crevices left in the loose construction of their walls, through which the winds had free passage, and the entire absence of fire, the desire for that element on the Lord's day and in the Lord's sanctuary being regarded as a carnal weakness which it was a prime duty of the faithful to crucify—afforded slight experience of better comfort. The attendants gathered in for preaching from distances of fifteen or twenty miles, riding on horseback, the women seated behind the men on pillions; the men bearing with them 'dumpling-bags' packed with provisions for consumption between sermons, and their rifles to guard against the always possible emergency of surprise from the Indians. An inspiring sight was it to witness these assemblies; the men seem-



ingly unconscious of heat or storm or cold, resting in various attitudes upon their loaded arms, and hearkening intently to such words of solid exhortation as the Old Testament texts in favor among their sect would suggest; and no less inspiring was it to hear such grand old hymns as 'Mear,' 'Old Hundred,' and 'Dundee,' sung to the quaint rhymes of Rouse, and ringing in majestic unison far along the tortuous aisles of the vast, open temple in which they worshiped.

For the surer protection of the people and as places of refuge during any hostile incursion of the savages, block-houses were established at different points throughout the 'Survey.' These were log structures about eighteen feet square, roofed with bark, carefully chunked to close the spaces between the logs, and perforated with funnel-shaped loopholes, through which to watch the movements of the Indians, and visit death, when opportunity offered, upon their barbarous assailants. In this service many of the women, whom long custom had qualified for the duty, acted, rifle in hand, with the men, while the less experienced—perhaps the less resolute—meanwhile moulded the bullets. The upper story of the block-houses—for they were usually composed



of two, the better to command the ground beyond the pickets—extended on all sides about two feet beyond the lower. This was likewise provided with loopholes, not only in the sides, but in that portion of the floor which projected beyond the apartment underneath, so that in case a storming party reach the doors below, the besieged could fire down upon their heads. The block-houses were always planted close by springs of water, and included within the trenches and pickets surrounding, space enough to fold the common stock driven thither for protection.

Commerce between the West and the East was carried on exclusively by pack-horses. The horses employed (mares were seldom, if ever, used) were of the Indian-pony breed, short and shaggy animals, but vigorous of muscle and full of endurance. The ‘make-up’ of a caravan for the grand tramp to Philadelphia consisted of from two hundred to three hundred horses, subdivided into companies of anywhere from ten to thirty, each of these companies being under the control of two managers—one, the supercargo, astride of the leading stallion, and the other, often a boy, on the animal at the rear, whose duty it was, armed with a whip consisting of a stout hickory





stock and a raw-hide lash of immense reach, in the use of which he became wonderfully expert, to keep the file in orderly motion. The driving of these caravans was an important and independent profession. The horses in charge of a supercargo were not his own, but furnished promiscuously upon each trip, animal by animal, by the farmers and traders as they had supplies to forward or receive. Each horse had a bell suspended from his neck, ordinarily, under march, stuffed with leaves to prevent its tinkling, but in camp at night, so that the whereabouts of an estray might be detected, or again to give pomp to an *entree* into towns on the way—Chambersburg, perhaps, or Carlisle—let free and made to ring lustily. If any of the animals were not trained to the march or disposed to be unruly, they were tied by ropes to the pack-saddle of the lead horse, and so forcibly inducted into orderly behavior. Each horse had his separate bridle—or halter with headstall, rather, because they used no bits—which was made of ropes plaited from the hair of their own tails and manes, not merely as an economical arrangement, but as a safe one, a horse being proof against capillary attraction, and never disposed to *chaw* a twist composed of



fibres of his own growing. If a stallion was not well broken to the business, or if he was inclined to rove when turned loose, he was spanceled at night—secured, that is, by tying his fore-legs together below the knees, allowing length enough of rope between to move haltingly about for forage, but not to wander too far or make his re-taking difficult in the morning. The horses were never shod. The routes over which they traveled were merely paths winding along the valleys and through the mountain passes, as originally engineered and traced out by the cunning instincts of the wild deer.

Pack-saddles were sometimes made of the forks of tree-branches cut in the shape of an inverted V, but more commonly of hewn-sticks fastened transversely together after the style of the letter X, having the arms of the upper angle (put there to prevent the load from slipping back or forward) considerably shorter than those of the lower. Two of these joined together by a strip of white-oak wood about six inches wide, extending at both ends—the ends being carefully rounded off—about two inches beyond the crosses, underlaid with deer skin padded with moss to protect shoulders and back from abrasion, the deer skins secured to



the frame with thongs of raw-hide, and the whole fastened in place by girths, cruppers and breast-straps, all of hair, constituted the saddle complete. Across these, bags were swung, in which kegs of whisky, bundles of medicinal roots, skins, &c., going east, were stowed, and, returning, salt and other packages of lading. When the return load was of iron, the bars were bent horse-shoe shape, to ride the more securely on the saddle, and to allow of the unhindered passage of the animals along the narrow, thicket-bordered trails. The first wagon to cross the Allegheny mountains was hauled by a team of four horses, owned and driven, in private enterprise, by John Hayden, of Uniontown, in Fayette county. He followed the road cut out by Braddock, and took with him on his first trip six barrels of whisky, bringing back two thousand pounds of 'store goods' for Jacob Bowman, of Brownsville, in the same county, receiving freight for the service at the rate of three dollars per hundred pounds. The harness of the horses, traces and all, was made of raw-hide ropes, and their collars of 'corn-shucks,' twisted as in old-fashioned bee hives, and shaped to fit the neck. He camped out every night. The meat and drink for sus-



tenance on the way he carried in a 'dumpling bag'—and in the barrels of his cargo.

While the country bartered to a considerable extent in peltries, and also in petroleum, then recognized under the different designations of Seneca, Stone, Rock, Spike, British, American, and heaven knows what other sorts of oil—each and all esteemed as sovereign remedies for burns, bruises, spavins, sore heels, and what-not in the way of disease or infirmity in man and beast—whisky was the staple commodity. Every well-to-do farmer had his own simple apparatus and did his own distilling. Of coin the settlers knew little, and for currency cared less. Whisky was their circulating medium. They bought with whisky; they sold for whisky. Whisky was the standard of value. The price of a pound of lead, or of powder, or of tobacco, was so many quarts of it; of a rifle, so many gallons; for an acre of ground within view of the metropolis, a ten gallon keg, and a barrel for a corner lot and the pasture privilege of the common in the town—by survey—of Allegheny. Whisky was the favorite and universal beverage of the people, the substitute for coffee, tea and—water. The farmer bore his flask of it with his





axe to the clearing, with his plough to the field, and with his rifle to the woods. He quaffed of it when he arose in the morning and when he retired at night; he drank of it before meals to sharpen his appetite, after them to aid digestion, and between times—because he liked it. Store-keepers exposed it on their counters in vessels flanked by bowls of maple sugar and tufts of tansy and peppermint, and customers partook of it, plain, sweet or in decoction, at their pleasure, freely and without cost. The preacher, like Herman Husbands, made medicine of it in his pulpit to give tone to his voice and edge to his wits for the more penetrating exposition of the law and the prophets. Only next to a sprinkle of water was its presence essential at christenings, second to nothing at weddings, and first and alone at the wakes held over the dead of their people. At home and abroad, at coming and departing, on all chances of social gathering, whether for mourning or rejoicing, at house-raising, at log-rollings, at harvestings, at huskings, the generous liquor was ever to be seen—the inevitable, indispensable concomitant of the occasion.

The political creed of the people was simple, but for them, practically as well as theoretically,



sufficient. Their favorite maxim, like that adopted by sectionalists of a later date, was to let alone and be let alone. They had for years following upon the first settlement of the region been literally without law. Justices during that time, and constables, courts and prisons, were unknown, or vaguely remembered as the officers and institutions of an unrighteous and proscriptive civilization, from which, like Lot from Sodom, they had originally escaped as for their lives. As the population multiplied, and the country was at a later period districted off into counties, the forms of law were indeed observed, but its judgments were tenderly decreed and not over rigidly executed. When a publican of Philadelphia was sent out to collect taxes under the revised law of 1777, the people amused themselves by singeing the wig and putting coals of fire into the boots of the detested official, offering a reward for his scalp, and finally shaving his head. The law afforded him neither redress nor protection. Out of seventy suits entered against delinquent distillers in 1790, all were set aside for *irregularity*. To be bound by enactments or made liable to penalties was distasteful to the settlers; not that they were prone to do evil, nor that their practices were



impeachable beyond common, but because it had the look of usurpation, and was inconsistent with their views of perfect freedom. Accustomed to the license of border life, free to come and go as they listed, to till their lands, to sow, to reap and to gather into barns, and be subject to no tithe of mint or of cummin for the privilege, when the checks and tolls of an organized system of government were fairly introduced, it is not to be wondered at if they chafed under the imposition, especially when made to bear against an unhindered traffic and indulgence in the prime element of their dependence.

Such was the state of society on the frontier when the Excise Law of 1791 was enacted, imposing a tax of from nine to twenty-five cents per gallon, according to strength, upon domestic spirits. If the tax had been levied on the air they breathed or the water they drank (from which, by the way, very little revenue would have been realized), it could not have excited the popular indignation more fiercely. This action of Congress had not been wholly unexpected. A scheme to the same effect had been proposed by Hamilton early in the session of the year previous. The people had caught at it then as a





menace of what might possibly happen in the future. Its simple suggestion had excited their alarm, and aroused in them the purpose to protect the rights to which they were entitled. Why should they contribute of the sweat of their brows to sustain a system of laws they deprecated and a government they preferred to repudiate anyhow, as it was ?

They were determined to be free. 'Liberty' became the chosen divinity of their worship. Poles were erected in her name, *vivas* shouted, and libations poured out—but not wasted—to her honor. Democratic societies were instituted in close sympathy and in correspondence with similar associations of revolutionary France, and Robespierre and Collot d'Herbois were names familiar and approved among the 'citizens' of the frontier. Rather than suffer restriction of their rights, they would cut loose from Federal authority—ay, and from State rule, too—altogether, and establish a separate and independent community of their own. Thus, through a twelve months' tide of preparatory fretfulness, when the decree came were they ripe for resistance. And so, out of the whirl and tumult of upstart disturbance, to ride upon its rush and follow it in its



course reckless as to whithersoever it might lead, arose TOM THE TINKER.

Who Tom the Tinker was, whence he came, and where exactly to place him since he had come, where questions all involved in mystery. Rumors prevailed that there were certain men who somewhere had encountered him, and who described him as an hard, revengeful fellow, ill-bred and of coarse manners, low instincts and lawless habits; but upon closer inquiry the person so described was found to be only a certain obscure neighborhood busybody of the name of John Holcroft. Others thought that he had been identified in the person of an individual of less ruffianly presence, but a man of violence withal, and a dangerous disturber of the peace; but *he* proved to be the prosecuting officer of Washington county, known as David Bradford. Some supposed him to be a French gentleman in disguise, fresh from the atmosphere of the secret club-rooms of Paris, come to propagate the new gospel of reform current in that capital; but Citizen Genet had not yet crossed the seas. No one could pronounce positively upon him, however; and among the less sensational and imaginative he was finally put down as a personage rather of myth, perhaps,



than of fact. Nevertheless, fact or figment, he exercised a sway over the populace that for the time was absolute.

From the year 1777—the date when officers were first commissioned to collect revenues west of the mountains—down to 1791, the people were satisfied to simply treat the law and its executors, sent over always from the East, with contempt, or, at worst, with such practical exhibitions of disapproval as have been alluded to in the case of Graham, the Philadelphia publican; but when, under the more stringent statute of '91, General Neville—one of their own most eminent and influential citizens, and who had been presumed, reasonably or not, to sympathize with them hitherto in their prejudices against the obnoxious enactment—consented to serve as inspector, the matter assumed a grave importance in their eyes. Singeing wigs and stuffing boots with live coals might do for the foreign hireling, but hardly for the popular neighbor, to whose generosities they were accustomed, and with whom in friendly intercourse they were daily wont to meet. Yet none the less, though in a more decided way, were they determined to face the exigency. Public meetings were called. The first was held on the 27th





of July, '91, at Redstone Old Fort, near Brownsville, on the Monongahela River, at which Findley, of Westmoreland, and Smiley, of Fayette county, members of Congress, together with Albert Gallatin, were present. Other assemblages, by resolution of this, were ordered in the four western counties—Allegheny and Washington, together with the two just mentioned—for the election of delegates to a general convention to be held at Pittsburg on the 7th of September following. The result of these meetings was a series of resolutions protesting against the Excise Act as deservedly obnoxious, attended with infringements on liberty, insulting in the inquisitorial proceedings necessary to its execution, and as a precedent tending to introduce the pernicious laws of foreign countries, where liberty, property, and even the morals of the people, were sported with, and made to be subordinate to the ends of selfish ambition.

The people of the region may be said at this juncture to have been divided into three classes: First, the Submissionists, or those who were willing to comply with the terms of the law—a small party mainly limited to Pittsburg and headed by Neville; second, the Conservatives (to





use the favorite term), who disapproved of the act, and would have it either corrected or rendered inoperative by making it odious, and represented by such men as Findley and Bradford and Galatin; and third, the Revolutionists, or those who repudiated the law outright, and would resist its execution *vi et armis*—a faction if not decidedly the strongest, certainly the most demonstrative, and led by Tom the Tinker. Now, in a division of this sort, as the middle party leans, one extreme or the other is pretty sure to claim to be entitled to, and, in point of fact, quite as sure to command, its sympathy. Would Findley declare that ‘the said law discouraged agriculture and a manufacture highly beneficial to them, and that it would fall most heavily on the new settlements of the West, where the aggregate of the citizens is of the laborious and poorer class, who have not the means of procuring the wines, spirituous liquors, etc., imported from foreign countries?’ Tom the Tinker, through the hundred throats of the ‘aggregates,’ could and would, with three times three, vociferate concurrence in the sentiment, and himself read a hint, besides which, at to-morrow’s harvesting or next day’s log-rolling, he would not be slow to put to account. Would Bradford



counsel that 'they should consider any man who was so far lost to every sense of virtue and feeling for the distresses of his country as to accept the office of collector, as unworthy of their friendship—that they would have no intercourse or dealing with him—that they would withdraw from him every assistance, upon all occasions treat him with that contempt he deserved, and earnestly recommend the people at large to follow the same line of conduct?' It was orthodox text, which the Revolutionist could accept, every word of it, and plead afterward, as was done, in justification of his own violence. Speculatively, there seemed to be entire harmony between the two parties: the difference—a material one, certainly, even though the Third Estate might not see it—turning upon the method practically of best choice for its correction.

Under Tom the Tinker's rendering of these public utterances, whispered cunningly, at fitting times, into the ears of such facile material as John Robertson, John Hamilton and Thomas McComb, what was the consequence? On the 6th of September, Robert Johnston, a collector, was waylaid on Pigeon creek, in Washington county, seized, tarred and feathered, relieved of



his horse, and in that plight sent adrift to seek shelter where he best might find it. Mr. Wells, collector of the district of Westmoreland and Fayette, was subjected to similar experience at the hands of the committees of the *enrages*, both in Greensburg and Uniontown. A man of the name of Wilson, a stranger of disordered intellect, made his appearance some time during the month of October, and wandered over the region, proclaiming himself fantastically as a grand commissioner appointed by President Washington to inquire generally into, and to regulate all matters pertaining to distilleries, assessments and collections, and to report the result to Congress. The distemper of his mind was clearly apparent. A party in disguise started in pursuit of him. Overtaking him in the night, they dragged him from his bed, carried him several miles away to a blacksmith shop, stripped him, burnt his clothing, branded him with hot irons, tarred and feathered him, and so, as daylight dawned, sore, scarred and naked, let him loose. He bore the treatment with the heroism of a martyr. The cases of some of the parties engaged in these proceedings were brought before the district court, out of which processes were issued for their arrest. The





deputy serving these processes was seized, whipped, tarred and feathered, robbed of his money and horse, blindfolded and tied to a tree in the woods. The marshal reported the failure of the attempt to the district attorney, and the result was 'a forbearance to urge coercive measures any further for the present.'

By act of Congress of May 8th, 1792, the law was materially and favorably modified. Generally, elsewhere, the modifications were accepted in satisfactory settlement of disagreements. But the case was different in the West. Opposition thus far had prospered so successfully, and with impunity so complete, that Tom the Tinker felt himself master of the situation, and would allow of no concession. The tax, he continued to re-iterate through his conservative friend Bradford, was unjust, oppressive and enslaving, and must be '*obstructed in its operation.*' That was the platform.

Under the law, as revised, officers of inspection for the accommodation of distillers were appointed, one for each county. Corrective treatment under Tom the Tinker had thus far been limited to the appointees under government. Now it was threatened against any who would let places of



accommodation for these officers, as well as against the few among the distillers who evinced a disposition to comply with the act. Captain William Faulkner allowed the use of a house to the inspector of Washington. He was met by a party lying in wait, who drew knives on him, threatened to scalp him and burn his house down if he did not solemnly pledge himself to dispossess his objectionable tenant. He did so, giving public notice of the fact through a card in the *Pittsburg Gazette*. William Richards, an informer against the rioters, had his barn burnt. Kiddoo and Cochran, complying distillers, had their stills and mills broken into and generally wrecked. Revolutionism was triumphantly in the ascendant.

Until midsummer of 1794 opposition was carried on by small gangs of not over, and often of less than, half a dozen malcontents, banded together for the emergency, and directed exclusively against the subordinate agents of the law. When the government at length began to exhibit determination, and the Marshal started out to serve his processes in person, counteraction on a corresponding scale was pronounced to be indispensable. Tom the Tinker let it be known that



'he was about with his bear skin budget,' and published the boast abroad that 'his iron was hot, his hammer was up, and he would not travel the country for nothing.' He posted his placards on the trees in the woods, on the fences along the highways, against the doors of shops and houses, and compelled, by intimidation, their reproduction in the columns of the *Gazette*. Citizens were warned that their liberties were in peril. If they would not be slaves, they must arm and to the rescue. If they would be successful, they must organize and meet force with force. If there were traitors among them, high or low, rich or poor, they must be treated all alike, according to their deserts. They must not content themselves with dealing out justice to the low subordinates of officials, but must strike at the heads. His inflammatory appeals were not wasted. Organizations were formed. The men were divided off into companies, with captains placed over them, and a strict military discipline enforced. John Brackenridge, of Bushy Run, sat up two successive nights with an axe in his hand, to defend himself against an expected visit from his commander—one Sharp—who had threatened his life for not attending a house-burning according to summons.





On the 15th of July, while the Marshal, accompanied by Inspector Neville, was traveling in the discharge of his duty, he was beset, and a gun fired on him in the assault, by a party of thirty or forty men. Next morning, at early dawn, a company, estimated variously and wildly at from thirty-six to 'about' a hundred persons, armed and led by the redoubtable John Holcroft, made an attack on Neville's house at Bower Hill, on the road to Washington, some eight miles from Pittsburg. John kept up a system of manœuvres until sunset, but was effectually held at bay by the inmates of the house. On the day following, large reinforcements having arrived meanwhile, the assault, under the leadership now of James McFarland, a militia Major, was renewed. The party besieged had likewise been strengthened by the arrival, during the night, of Major Kirkpatrick with a detachment of eleven men from the garrison of Fort Fayette. The unpromising prospect of a successful defense against the great odds with which he had to contend induced Kirkpatrick to invite a truce. A parley was had under cover of a flag, but the demands of the insurgents were more than Kirkpatrick was willing to concede, and the interview terminated





fruitlessly. The besiegers resumed their attack. The barn and adjoining out-houses were set on fire, the flames speedily communicating with the mansion, when the Major and his little guard came out and surrendered, but not until several of the assailants were wounded, and their leader, McFarland, a prominent and favorite citizen, killed. The cellar of the Collector contained a full supply of choice liquors, which also were entirely consumed—but not by the flames.

A meeting was held at Mingo meeting-house six days after the assault at Bower Hill, composed principally of the participants in that affair. The officers and orators were of the Conservative party and men of position in society. The last week's excitement had subsided. With the calm had come a feeling of 'gloom and distrust.' The addresses delivered, far different from the fiery harangues indulged in at former gatherings, were of a comparatively moderate and conciliatory character. Tom the Tinker, still defiant as ever, was more than disgusted at the turn affairs were taking.

"You," said he, taking the floor, and aiming his speech pointedly at Bradford, "You encouraged us in this matter by your words; you counseled



with us when we took counsel; you know what has been done; we wish to know whether what has been done is right or wrong, and whether we are to be supported or left to ourselves."

"I encourage?" exclaimed Bradford. "Good God! I never thought of such a thing!"

"You did," Tom the Tinker rejoined; "and if you don't support us now, you shall be treated as an excise officer yourself."

Bradford yielded, and from that time became a chief leader of the movement. Others attempted to stave off a committal in the matter—some from fear, some because they could not pledge approval of violence, and yet did not deem it expedient, on the other hand, to risk a forfeiture of a wholesome influence over the multitude by arraying themselves declaredly in opposition. Conspicuous among these latter were Brackenridge and Galatin. While the course of these gentlemen—particularly the one first mentioned, then a candidate for Congress—was at the time, and has been since, severely commented upon, there can be little doubt but that they were eminently instrumental in the prevention of very seriously threatened disaster, and in the final happy settlement of the whole trouble. On the present occa-



sion Mr. Brackenridge spoke, and with such address that the meeting dissolved without definite action of any sort, except to invite a general congress of delegates to a future convention, to be held at Parkinson's Ferry.

Tom the Tinker, to forestall any undesirable action that might be taken at the proposed convention, determined to commit the insurgents beforehand, to some such flagrant deed of lawlessness, as would hold them, out of the reach of after-relief, to his following. A first act decided upon was to rob the mail. Two agents were appointed, who intercepted the post-boy a short distance out from Greensburg, and relieved him of his bag. An examination of the contents of the abstracted letters, discovered to Tom that he was made the subject of comments, by those high in authority, which foreboded a dealing with him presently, not at all pleasant to anticipate. This spurred him on promptly to his second act. A secret conclave was called of half a dozen of his proved agents at a country tavern near Canonsburg. A circular letter was drawn up by this cabal, and dispatched by messengers in every direction. This missive embodied the declaration that, 'from letters by the post in our possession, cer-





tain secrets are discovered hostile to our interests ; therefore it has come to that crisis that every citizen must express his sentiments, not by words, but by actions ;' and ended by calling upon each one 'to appear armed and supplied with four days' provisions at Braddock's Field (the usual place for holding the annual brigade muster) on the first day of August, at two o'clock in the afternoon.' The expressed object of this gathering was to march upon Pittsburg, to seize the magazines of the garrison, and to arrest the writers of the offensive letters. The publication of the circular provoked strong remonstrances from the Middle party ; and the personal risk to which he would expose himself by the movement so operated upon Bradford, its author, that he undertook to countermand the order. The populace were furiously enraged in consequence. A meeting was called at the Washington courthouse, where the excitement ran so high that Bradford felt himself constrained to deny the authorship of the countermand, and to insist, in vehement terms, that the appointment should be observed. A resolution to this effect was offered and carried triumphantly.

The day was at hand which was to be decisive of the fortunes of Tom the Tinker. The zeal



worthy of a nobler cause, which, through the feeble results that crowned its first efforts, had struggled persistently on, was now, if ever, to realize the reward of that perseverance. No longer the covert instigator merely to a midnight assault upon a miserable, helpless deputy collector, with a brace of knaves under disguise for his tools, he was to appear the captain of an army reckoned by battalions and prepared to march with banners unfurled in the light of day, boldly, and in the face of whatever might oppose. But the emergency was a critical one. The Conservative element, though silenced, was not subdued. The mutterings of a power that could wield a scourge began to be heard from beyond the mountains. Of the Golden Circle of his own confederates, moreover, were the initiated all, beyond a peradventure, good men and true? Complicated and questionable as the case was, however, Tom the Tinker had committed himself to the task of its execution, and was determined to see it through. Setting himself promptly to work, he traversed the length and breadth of the settlements, comforting the faithful, emboldening the timid, bullying the doubtful and threatening dire mischief to the suspected—all who, upon whatever pretense,



should fail to come up to the work in response to the summons. His mission was apparently successful. At once began the hum and hurry of preparation all through the Survey. Neighbors hastened hither and thither, busy to aid and to watch each other. Bullets were molded, flints picked, deer skins stitched into pouches, cows' horns carved into powder flasks, tomahawks sharpened, knives ground ; while the blacksmith shops, far and near, became resonant with the toils spent upon repairs to old muskets, rifles and shot-guns.

The three days allotted for preparation passed by, and the morning of August 1st found a force of seven thousand men, about one-third mounted, the rest on foot, assembled at the appointed place of rendezvous. It was a motley assemblage. The men were dressed in hunting shirts, with caps, some, some with hats, others lacking both, with handkerchiefs wrapped about their heads,—their faces disguised under daubs of copper-colored paint or smeared with black, in imitation of the savage when on the war-path. They roamed about camp at pleasure, amusing themselves by shooting at marks or firing blank cartridges in the air over each other's heads. Bradford as-





sumed the position of Major-General. Mounted on a magnificent charger decorated with gorgeous trappings, himself habited in complete military uniform, he galloped hither and thither about the field, his drawn sword flashing in the sun and his rich plumes streaming in the air. A proud man was Bradford on that day! The soldiers were devoted to him. When he thirsted, it was a glad service for a follower to wade into the river and with his hat (when he had one) dip a supply of water from the cool depths of the channel, and bear it, dripping, to him that he might drink. The plan of the campaign in hand was well understood by the rank and file. They were to march into Pittsburg—held in peculiar disrelish because of its presumed disloyalty to Tom the Tinker—dispatch in some short, sharp and decisive way the Submissionists, conquer possession of Fort Pitt, ‘burn down with fire from earth this second Sodom (the town), as the old Sodom had been burned by fire from heaven,’ secede from the Federal rule and establish an independent commonwealth of their own. The people of Pittsburg, aware of their plans, became alarmed, called a meeting, passed a series of resolutions in which they *mis*represented themselves—on the





plea that it was the only expedient left to insure their safety—as in sympathy with the insurgents, and declared that they would not only ‘compel such as were unfriendly to the cause to instantly depart the town,’ but would themselves ‘march out and join the people at Braddock’s Field as brethren, to aid them in carrying into effect any measure deemed advisable for the *common cause*.’ A committee of twenty-one, accompanied by a militia force of two hundred and fifty men under command of General Wilkins, started off to report their proceedings at camp and negotiate, if possible, some peaceable settlement with the rebels.

Conferences were held. Earnest attempts were made to dissuade the Revolutionists from the destructive movement threatened. There was no necessity for it, and it could terminate in no advantage. The authors of the offensive letters, it was urged, had already gone into voluntary banishment. The few of their sympathizing friends left behind were incapable of doing harm. The fort might be captured, at the expense of, say, a thousand lives, but would it pay at the sacrifice? And in such an event was there not room to apprehend that the Federal chief at Philadelphia



might undertake to venture out and vindicate his supremacy at the head of a host sufficient for the enterprise?

"That would be coercion!" exclaimed the democratic general.

"Undoubtedly," said Brackenridge, on behalf of the committee.

"It would be unconstitutional."

"Unquestionably."

"It would involve an invasion of our territory, and a gross defiance of the sovereign rights of the intermediate counties."

"Precisely; the courts might so decide in the end, but men could be made to swing in the mean time. Military judgments are proverbially sudden of execution."

Now, Bradford, in his blue uniform, with the plume in his hat, the sword on his thigh, the spurs on his heels, and a steed at command worthy the princely proprietor of the only shingled house in Washington county, felt himself to be every inch a soldier; and so perhaps he was, but the valor becoming the officer was tempered with the discretion befitting the citizen.

Revolving in his mind the hints suggested, symptoms of irresolution began to betray themselves.



"What am I to do?" said he, hesitatingly, at length. "The people are here for an avowed purpose, and they are not to be thwarted."

"Oh," said Brackenridge, "a simple demonstration will satisfy them. The plan of movement need not be changed. We will march into town, intimidate the citizens with a show of what we could do if we had a mind to, plead magnanimity, take a drink, and then—march out again."

Upon this compromise the conference ended. When the result was made known, murmurs of dissatisfaction were heard here and there. Tom the Tinker cursed his lieutenant in trenchant style, but the rank and file generally accepted the decision with entire content. Next day, what was left of the army—about one-fourth having quietly dispersed in the meantime—piloted by Brackenridge, took up the route, entered Pittsburg at four o'clock in the afternoon, paraded its streets, and halted finally on the vacant plain between Market street and Grant's Hill. Here, according to the terms of the arrangement, whole barrels of whisky were broached and dealt out to the men. Taking advantage of the opportune moment, when the temper of their guests was





stimulated to its most tractable pitch, the cavalry were mounted and led by the ford, the low water luckily allowing of the passage, while the infantry, put afloat in skiffs, flat boats and on rafts, were ferried across the river and tramped to the top of Coal Hill, where they bivouacked for the night, and whence they dispersed to their homes in the morning.

The campaign was ended. Standing on the brow of the eminence overlooking it, Tom the Tinker cast his eye down upon the town. There it lay within the embrace of its waters, as whole and harmless as though its streets had never felt the tread of hostile feet. After the sworn resolve of devastation and ruin, after the responsive uprising of eager legions to see it executed, the arming, the gathering, the organizing, seven thousand strong, and the moving by column—banners flying, plumes waving and shouts ringing—down against devoted Sodom, this was the achievement and this the end—drinks all around and a free transportation, for happy riddance, across the river! Nevertheless, abortive—weakly, ridiculously abortive—as had proved the enterprise, and disastrously as must work the failure upon its future prospects, Tom the Tinker



could not, would not, abandon all hope for the revolution. The movement might have been premature. He must recede a pace in its progress, trace out fresh schemes of policy, temper his measures to accommodate the scruples of the Middle party, and on the basis thus contrived establish his lines, trusting to the divinity that shaped his ends for the better issue of the new adventure.

According to appointment of the meeting at Mingo, the convention of delegates, numbering two hundred and twenty-six, assembled on the fourteenth of August at Parkinson's Ferry, now Monongahela City, on the river of that name, Edward Cook, a venerable pioneer, in the chair, and Albert Gallatin, secretary. Tom the Tinker, promptly on the ground, proposed toward the furtherance of his plans, an endorsement of certain declarations, which were presented by proxy of one of his special favorites in a series of resolutions. The first was to the effect that the taking of citizens from their respective neighborhoods to be tried for real or supposed offenses was a violation of their rights, a forced construction of the Constitution, and ought not to be exercised by the judicial authority; the second, that a Committee



of Public Safety should be appointed, with instructions 'to call forth the resources of the Western country to repel any invasion that might be made against their rights;' the third, 'that a remonstrance to Congress should be prepared, praying a repeal of the Excise Law;' the fourth, that a manifesto should be issued, for the President, the Governors of Pennsylvania and Virginia, and for 'the world,' declarative of the motives, liable to be misconstrued, leading to the disturbance at Neville's house and 'the great and general rendezvous of the people at Braddock's Field.' The fifth was an expression of willingness to abide by law and government, 'the Excise Laws and taking away citizens for trial only excepted.' The first resolution was adopted without dispute. The others elicited controversy. The Conservatives could not approve of an investment of the power 'to call forth resources to repel invasion' in the hands of a committee. Neither, indeed, could the lukewarm among the Extremists, who had faltered in the memorable march on Pittsburg, and whose demoralized faith had prompted the apologetic introduction of 'the motives *liable to be misconstrued*' in the fourth resolution.





Tom the Tinker struggled zealously on behalf of his text, but the tide was against him. Nor was his case strengthened when, in the midst of discussion, it was learned that a commission had arrived from Philadelphia to represent the Government in a final attempt at pacification. The resolutions were at once erased of their revolutionary features, the valorous tone of the second especially being tamed down so as only to authorize the committee on public safety, 'in case of any sudden emergency, to take such temporary measures as they may think necessary.' Thus amended, under the prudent and persistent management, and in accordance with the conservative policy of Brackenridge and Gallatin, the resolutions were adopted.

The standing committee met, chose a delegation of twelve to confer with the Federal commissioners (Judge Yates, Senator Ross and William Bradford, Attorney General) at Pittsburg, on the 20th of August, and appointed September 2d and Brownsville as the time and place when and where to take action on their report. Upon assembly of the conferees at Pittsburg, excitement ran high with Tom the Tinker and his men. Before the house in which they were gathered a





liberty pole was erected, and a flag with seven stars, one for each of the confederate counties—the four western and Bedford in Pennsylvania, with two in Virginia—unfurled amid the roistering cheers and malevolent menaces of the mob. The consultation between the commissioners was long and earnest, but resulted, at length, in a mutual agreement upon terms of adjustment—an assent, in fact, to the terms demanded by the Government—and the drawing up of a report accordingly.

The last eventful day in the history of the insurrection arrived when the assembly of the standing committee, or 'Scrub Congress,' as it was contemptuously styled, took place at Brownsville. Tom the Tinker, alive to the vital necessity of a display of force sufficient to overawe the delegates, had gathered in his followers from far and near. Among the rest appeared a body of seventy stalwart fellows—Mingo men, all—armed with rifle, tomahawk and knife, as at the rendezvous at Braddock's Field. The report of the conferees was read, and in gallant style, despite of dissatisfied murmurs and derisive ejaculations of 'Good Lord, deliver us!' defended in speeches of eloquent force by Gallatin and Brackenridge. It



was then decided to take a vote upon the report, when, in order to secure an unintimidated and unbiased expression of sentiment, a novel method was adopted at the suggestion of a delegate. Sixty scraps of paper, one for each member of the committee, were provided by the secretary, upon which, in different places and by his hand, *yea* and *nay* were written. These were distributed among the members, by them torn into two pieces, and one of them, containing its affirmative or negative, was secretly folded and deposited in the secretary's hat, while the other was made way with by chewing to a pulp in the mouth or in some other equally effective manner. Quite to their own surprise, and inexpressibly to the astonishment of Tom the Tinker's men, the count of the ballots disclosed a vote of thirty-four against twenty-three, the proposition of the commissioners prevailing by a majority of eleven. This revelation of the true state of affairs between the parties produced a wonderful effect. The Conservatives, kept timidly in check hitherto by a feeling of inferiority, grew courageous at the discovery of their strength, while the Revolutionists, on the other hand, shrank back bewildered at the betrayal of their weakness.



Insolence of speech abated, effrontery of action subsided. One by one, stealthily and quietly, with their rifles under their arms, began to creep out the seventy—one by one the Mingo men, down along the valley paths, up the slopes to the highlands, and so along the devious trails, off to their scattered lodges in the wilderness.

The insurrection was virtually ended. A spasmodic attempt or two was made for its resuscitation, but without noticeable results. All concerned, to screen themselves from consequences—for the Federal army was on its march—were hurrying in to subscribe to the test oath ordered, and thus secure advantage of the proffered amnesty. Bradford was among the most humble of the suitors for pardon, but his treason did not admit of expiation, and he was forced to abscond. Mounted on his famous steed, he made for the Ohio river. There he abandoned the good horse, lay all night, cold and hungry, in a canoe, crawled next morning into a contractor's coal boat, was overtaken and seized by a party sent in pursuit, and would have been dragged unresistingly and ignominiously away, but for the interference of a Washington county lad, himself a fugitive, who, rifle in hand, rushed to his aid





and brought him rescue. He then steered for the Spanish dominions, ending his career in the quiet pursuit of sugar-cane culture on a Louisiana plantation.

Deserted by his Lieutenant-General, Tom the Tinker felt himself abandoned by his last hope, and resigned himself to despair over the Lost Cause. His presence was recognized no longer in the Survey. Many supposed that to flee well-merited retribution he had taken to horse, like his chief officer, and, following hard upon his heels, had flitted to foreign parts. Others suspected that he still tarried, but under safe concealment, within limit of the old familiar sphere, and that he might be expected to reappear, ripe for riot as of yore, at any day, when time and circumstances invited.



STEPHEN C. FOSTER,  
AND NEGRO MINSTRELSY.



# STEPHEN C. FOSTER,

## AND NEGRO MINSTRELSY.

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THIRTY-SIX years ago a young man, about twenty-five years of age, of a commanding height,—six feet full, the heels of his boots not included in the reckoning,—and dressed in scrupulous keeping with the fashion of the time, might have been seen sauntering idly along one of the principal streets of Cincinnati. To the few who could claim acquaintance with him he was known as an actor, playing at the time referred to a short engagement as light comedian in a theater of that city. He does not seem to have attained to any noticeable degree of eminence in his profession, but he had established for himself a reputation among jolly fellows in a social way. He could tell a story, sing a song, and dance a hornpipe, after a style which, however unequal to complete



success on the stage, proved, in private performance to select circles rendered appreciative by accessory refreshments, famously triumphant always. If it must be confessed that he was deficient in the more profound qualities, it is not to be inferred that he was destitute of all the distinguishing, though shallower, virtues of character. He had the merit, too, of a proper appreciation of his own capacity; and his aims never rose above that capacity. As a superficial man he dealt with superficial things, and his dealings were marked by tact and shrewdness. In his sphere he was proficient, and he kept his wits upon the alert for everything that might be turned to professional and profitable use. Thus it was that, as he sauntered along one of the main thoroughfares of Cincinnati, as has been written, his attention was suddenly arrested by a voice ringing clear and full above the noises of the street, and giving utterance, in an unmistakable dialect, to the refrain of a song to this effect:—

“Turn about an’ wheel about an’ do jis so,  
An’ every time I turn about I jump Jim Crow.”

Struck by the peculiarities of the performance, so unique in style, matter and “character” of de-





livery, the player listened on. Were not these elements—was the suggestion of the instant—which might admit of higher than mere street or stable-yard development? As a national or “race” illustration behind the footlights, might not “Jim Crow” and a black face tickle the fancy of pit and circle, as well as the “Sprig of Shillalah” and a red nose? Out of the suggestion leaped the determination; and so it chanced that the casual hearing of a song trolled by a negro stage-driver, lolling lazily on the box of his vehicle, gave origin to a school of music destined to excel in popularity all others, and to make the name of the obscure actor, T. D. RICE, famous.

As his engagement at Cincinnati had nearly expired, Rice deemed it expedient to postpone a public venture in the newly projected line until the opening of a fresh engagement should assure him opportunity to share fairly the benefit expected to grow out of the experiment. This engagement had already been entered into; and accordingly, shortly after, in the autumn of 1830, he left Cincinnati for Pittsburg.

The old theater of Pittsburg occupied the site of the present one, on Fifth Street. It was an unpretending structure, rudely built of boards,



and of moderate proportions, but sufficient, nevertheless, to satisfy the taste and secure the comfort of the few who dared to face consequences and lend patronage to an establishment under the ban of the Scotch-Irish Calvinists. Entering upon duty at the "Old Drury" of the "Birmingham of America," Rice prepared to take advantage of his opportunity. There was a negro in attendance at Griffith's Hotel, on Wood Street, named Cuff,—an exquisite specimen of his sort,—who won a precarious subsistence by letting his open mouth as a mark for boys to pitch pennies into, at three paces, and by carrying the trunks of passengers from the steamboats to the hotels. Cuff was precisely the subject for Rice's purpose. Slight persuasion induced him to accompany the actor to the theater, where he was led through the private entrance, and quietly ensconced behind the scenes. After the play, Rice, having shaded his own countenance to the "contraband" hue, ordered Cuff to disrobe, and proceeded to invest himself in the cast-off apparel. When the arrangements were complete, the bell rang, and Rice, habited in an old coat forlornly dilapidated, with a pair of shoes composed equally of patches and places for patches



on his feet, and wearing a coarse straw hat in a melancholy condition of rent and collapse over a dense black wig of matted moss, waddled into view. The extraordinary apparition produced an instant effect. The crash of peanuts ceased in the pit, and through the circles passed a murmur and a bustle of liveliest expectation. The orchestra opened with a short prelude, and to its accompaniment Rice began to sing, delivering the first line by way of introductory recitative:—

“O, Jim Crow’s come to town, as you all must know,  
An’ he wheel about, he turn about, he do jis so,  
An’ ebery time he wheel about he jump Jim Crow.”

The effect was electric. Such a thunder of applause as followed was never heard before within the shell of that old theater. With each succeeding couplet and refrain the uproar was renewed, until presently, when the performer, gathering courage from the favorable temper of his audience, ventured to improvise matter for his distiches from familiarly known local incidents, the demonstrations were deafening.

Now it happened that Cuff, who meanwhile was crouching in dishabille under concealment of a projecting *flat* behind the performer, by some





means received intelligence, at this point, of the near approach of a steamer to the Monongahela wharf. Between himself and others of his color in the same line of business, and especially as regarded a certain formidable competitor called Ginger, there existed an active rivalry in the baggage-carrying business. For Cuff to allow Ginger the advantage of an undisputed descent upon the luggage of the approaching vessel would be not only to forfeit all "considerations" from the passengers, but, by proving him a laggard in his calling, to cast a damaging blemish upon his reputation. Liberally as he might lend himself to a friend, it could not be done at that sacrifice. After a minute or two of fidgety waiting for the song to end, Cuff's patience could endure no longer, and, cautiously hazarding a glimpse of his profile beyond the edge of the flat, he called in a hurried whisper: "Massa Rice, Massa Rice, must have my clo'se! Massa Griffif wants me, —steamboat's comin'!"

The appeal was fruitless. Massa Rice did not hear it, for a happy hit at an unpopular city functionary had set the audience in a roar in which all other sounds were lost. Waiting some moments longer, the restless Cuff, thrusting his



visage from under cover into full three-quarters view this time, again charged upon the singer in the same words, but with a more emphatic voice: "Massa Rice, Massa Rice, must have my clo'se! Massa Griffif wants me,—*steamboat's comin'!*"

A still more successful couplet brought a still more tempestuous response, and the invocation of the baggage-carrier was unheard and unheeded. Driven to desperation, and forgetful in the emergency of every sense of propriety, Cuff, in ludicrous undress as he was, started from his place, rushed upon the stage, and, laying his hand upon the performer's shoulder, called out excitedly: "Massa Rice, Massa Rice, gi' me nigga's hat,—nigga's coat,—nigga's shoes,—gi' me nigga's t'ings! Massa Griffif wants 'im,—STEAMBOAT'S COMIN'!!"

The incident was the touch, in the mirthful experience of that night, that passed endurance. Pit and circles were one scene of such convulsive merriment, that it was impossible to proceed in the performance, and the extinguishment of the footlights, the fall of the curtain, and the throwing wide of the doors for exit, indicated that the entertainment was ended.

Such were the circumstances—authentic in



every particular — under which the first work of the distinct art of Negro Minstrelsy was presented.

Next day found the song of Jim Crow, in one style of delivery or another, on everybody's tongue. Clerks hummed it serving customers at shop counters, artisans thundered it at their toils to the time-beat of sledge and of tilt-hammer, boys whistled it on the streets, ladies warbled it in parlors, and house-maids repeated it to the clink of crockery in kitchens. Rice made up his mind to profit further by its popularity; he determined to publish it. Mr. W. C. Peters, afterwards of Cincinnati, and well known as a composer and publisher, was at that time a music-dealer on Market Street in Pittsburg. Rice, ignorant himself of the simplest elements of musical science, waited upon Mr. Peters, and solicited his co-operation in the preparation of his song for the press. Some difficulty was experienced before Rice could be induced to consent to the correction of certain trifling informalities, rhythmical mainly, in his melody; but, yielding finally, the air as it now stands, with a piano-forte accompaniment by Mr. Peters, was put upon paper.





The manuscript was placed in the hands of Mr. John Newton, who reproduced it upon stone with an elaborately embellished title-page, including a portrait of the subject of the song, precisely as it has been copied through succeeding editions to the present time. It was the first specimen of lithography ever executed in Pittsburg.

Jim Crow was repeated nightly throughout the season at the theater; and when that was ended, Beale's Long Room, at the corner of Second and Market Streets, was engaged for rehearsals exclusively in the Ethiopian line. "Clar de Kitchen" soon appeared as a companion piece, speedily followed by "Lucy Long," "Sich a Gittin' up Stairs," "Long-Tail Blue," and so on, until quite a *repertoire* was at command from which to choose for an evening's entertainment.

Rice remained in Pittsburg some two years. He then visited Philadelphia, Boston, and New York, whence he sailed for England, where he met with high favor in his novel character, married, and remained for some time. He then returned to New York, and shortly afterwards died.

With Rice's retirement his art seems to have dropped into disuse as a feature of theatrical





entertainment, and thenceforward, for many years, to have survived only in the performances of circuses and menageries. Between acts the *extravaganzaist* in cork and wool would appear, and to the song of "Coal-Black Rose," or "Jim along Joe," or "Sittin' on a Rail," command, with the clown and monkey, full share of admiration in the arena. At first he performed *solus*, and to the accompaniment of the "show" band; but the school was progressive; couples presently appeared, and, dispensing with the aid of foreign instruments, delivered their melodies to the more appropriate music of the banjo. To the banjo, in a short time, were added the bones. The art had now outgrown its infancy, and, disdaining a subordinate existence, boldly seceded from the society of harlequin and the tumblers, and met the world as an independent institution. Singers organized themselves into quartet bands; added a fiddle and a tambourine to their instruments—perhaps we should say implements—of music; introduced the hoe-down and the conundrum to fill up the intervals of performance; rented halls, and peregrinating from city to city and from town to town went on and prospered.

One of the oldest companies of this sort was



organized and sustained under the leadership of Nelson Kneass, who, while skillful in his manipulations of the banjo, was quite an accomplished pianist besides, as well as a favorite ballad-singer. He had some pretensions as a composer, but has left his name identified with no work of any interest. His company met with such success in Pittsburg, that its visits were repeated from season to season, until about the year 1845, when Mr. Murphy, the leading caricaturist, determined to resume the business in private life which he had laid aside on going upon the stage, and the company was disbanded.

Up to this period, if negro minstrelsy had made some progress, it was not marked by much improvement. Its charm lay essentially in its simplicity, and to give it full development, retaining unimpaired meanwhile such original excellences as Nature in Sambo shapes and inspires, was the task of the time. But the task fell into bungling hands. The true belongings of the art were misapprehended or perverted altogether. Its naive misconceits were construed into coarse blunders; its pleasing incongruities were resolved into meaningless jargon. Gibberish became the staple of its composition. Slang phrases and crude jests,



all odds and ends of vulgar sentiment, without regard to the idiosyncrasies of the negro, were caught up, jumbled together into rhyme, and, rendered into the lingo presumed to be genuine, were ready for the stage. The wit of the performance was made to consist in quibble and equivocate, and in the misuse of language, after the fashion, but without the refinement, of Mrs. Partington. The character of the music underwent a change. Original airs were composed from time to time, but the songs were more generally adaptations of tunes in vogue among Hard-Shell Baptists in Tennessee and at Methodist camp-meetings in Kentucky, and of backwoods melodies, such as had been invented for native ballads by "settlement" masters and brought into general circulation by stage-drivers, wagoners, cattle drovers and other such itinerants of earlier days. Music of the concert room was also drafted into the service, and selections from the inferior operas, with the necessary mutilations of the text, of course; so that the whole school of negro minstrelsy threatened a lapse, when its course of decline was suddenly and effectually arrested.

A certain Mr. Andrews, dealer in confections, cakes, and ices, being stirred by a spirit of enter-





prise, rented, in the year 1845, a second-floor hall on Wood Street, Pittsburg, supplied it with seats and small tables, advertised largely, employed cheap attractions,—living statues, songs, dances, &c.—erected a stage, hired a piano, and, upon the dissolution of his band, engaged the services of Nelson Kneass as musician and manager. Admittance was free, the ten-cent ticket required at the door being received at its first cost value within towards the payment of whatever might be called for at the tables. To keep alive the interest in the enterprise, premiums were offered, from time to time, of a bracelet for the best conundrum, a ring with a ruby setting for the best comic song, and a golden chain for the best sentimental song. The most and perhaps only really valuable reward—a genuine and very pretty silver cup, exhibited night after night beforehand—was promised to the author of the best original negro song, to be presented before a certain date, and to be decided upon by a committee designated for the purpose by the audience at that time.

Quite a large array of competitors entered the lists; but the contest would be hardly worthy of mention, save as it was the occasion of the first appearance of him who was to prove the reformer



of his art, and to a sketch of whose career the foregoing pages are chiefly preliminary.

STEPHEN COLLINS FOSTER was born in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, on the 4th of July, 1826. He was the youngest child of his father, William B. Foster,—originally a merchant of Pittsburg, and afterwards Mayor of his native city, member of the State Legislature, and a Federal officer under President Buchanan, with whom he was closely connected by marriage. The evidences of a musical capacity of no common order were apparent in Stephen at an early period. Going into a shop, one day, when about seven years old, he picked up a flageolet, the first he had ever seen, and comprehending, after an experiment or two, the order of the scale on the instrument, was able in a few minutes, uninstructed, to play any of the simple tunes within the octave with which he was acquainted. A Thespian society, composed of boys in their higher teens, was organized in Allegheny, into which Stephen, although but in his ninth year, was admitted, and of which, from his agreeable rendering of the favorite airs of the day, he soon became the leading attraction.

At thirteen years of age he made his first at-



tempt at composition, producing for a public occasion at the seminary in Athens, Ohio, where he was a student at the time, the "Tioga Waltz," which, although quite a pretty affair, he never thought worthy of preservation. In the same year, shortly afterwards, he composed music to a song commencing, "Sadly to mine heart appealing," now embraced in the list of his publications, but not brought out until many years later.

Stephen was a boy of delicate constitution, not addicted to the active sports or any of the more vigorous habits of boys of his age. His only companions were a few intimate friends, and, thus secluded, his character naturally took a sensitive, meditative cast, and his growing disrelish for severer tasks was confirmed. As has been intimated, he entered as a pupil at Athens; but as the course of instruction in that institution was not in harmony with his tastes, he soon withdrew, applying himself afterward to the study of the French and German languages (a ready fluency in both of which he finally acquired), and especially to the art dearer than all other studies. A recluse, owning and soliciting no guidance but that of his text-book, in the quiet of the woods,





or, if that were inaccessible, the retirement of his chamber, he devoted himself to this art.

At the age of sixteen he composed and published the song, "Open thy Lattice, Love," which was admired, but did not meet with extraordinary success. In the year following he went to Cincinnati, entering the counting-room of his brother, and discharging the duties of his place with faithfulness and ability. His spare hours were still devoted, however, to his favorite pursuit, although his productions were chiefly preserved in manuscript, and kept for the private entertainment of his friends. He continued with his brother nearly three years.

At the time Mr. Andrews of Pittsburg offered a silver cup for the best original negro song, Mr. Morrison Foster sent to his brother Stephen a copy of the advertisement announcing the fact, with a letter urging him to become a competitor for the prize. These saloon entertainments occupied a neutral ground, upon which eschewers of theatrical delights could meet with the abettors of play-house amusements,—a consideration of ruling importance in Pittsburg, where so many of the sterling population carry with them to this day, by legitimate inheritance, the staunch old





Cameronian fidelity to Presbyterian creed and practice. Morrison, believing that these concerts would afford an excellent opportunity for the genius of his brother to appeal to the public, persisted in urging him to compete for the prize, until Stephen, who at first expressed a dislike to appear under such circumstances, finally yielded, and in due time forwarded a melody entitled, "'Way down South whar de Corn grows." When the eventful night came, the various pieces in competition were rendered to the audience by Nelson Kneass to his own accompaniment on the piano. The audience expressed by their applause a decided preference for Stephen's melody; but the committee appointed to sit in judgment decided in favor of some one else, himself and his song never heard of afterwards, and the author of "'Way down South" forfeited the cup. But Mr. Kneass appreciated the merit of the composition, and promptly, next morning, made application at the proper office for a copyright in his own name as author, when Mr. Morrison Foster, happening in at the moment, interposed, and frustrated the discreditable intention.

This experiment of Foster's, if it fell short of the expectations of his friends, served, notwith-



standing, a profitable purpose, for it led him to a critical investigation of the school of music to which it belonged. This school had been — was yet — unquestionably popular. To what, then, was it indebted for its captivating points? It was to its truth to Nature in her simplest and most childlike mood.

Settled as to theory, Foster applied himself to the task of its exemplification. Two attempts were made while he yet remained in Cincinnati, the pencil-drafts of which, however, were laid aside for the time being in his portfolio. His shrinking nature held timidly back at the thought of a venture before the public; and so the case stood until he reappeared in Pittsburg.

The Presidential campaign of 1844 was distinguished by political song-singing. Clubs for that purpose were organized in all the cities and towns and hamlets, — clubs for the platform, clubs for the street, clubs for the parlor, Whig clubs, Democratic clubs. Ballads innumerable to airs indefinite, new and old, filled the land, — Irish ballads, German ballads, Yankee ballads, and, preferred over all, negro ballads. So enthusiastic grew the popular feeling in this direction, that, when the November crisis was come and gone,



the peculiar institution would not succumb to the limitation, but lived on. Partisan temper faded out; the fires of strife died down, but clubs sat perseveringly in their places, and in sounds, if not in sentiment, attuned to the old melodies, kept up the practices of the mad and merry time.

Among other organizations that lingered on was one, composed of half a dozen young men, since grown into graver habits, with Foster — home again, and a link once more in the circle of his intimates—at its head. The negro airs were still the favorites; but the collection, from frequent repetition, at length began to grow stale. One night, as a revival measure for the club, and as an opportunity for himself, Foster hinted that, with their permission, he would offer for trial an effort of his own. Accordingly he set to work; and at their next meeting laid before them a song entitled "Louisiana Belle." The piece elicited unanimous applause. Its success in the club-room opened to it a wider field, each member acting as an agent of dissemination outside, so that in the course of a few nights the song was sung in almost every parlor in Pittsburg. Foster then brought to light his portfolio specimens, since universally known as "Uncle Ned,"





and "O Susanna!" The favor with which these latter were received surpassed even that rewarding the "Louisiana Belle." Although limited to the one slow process of communication, — from mouth to ear, — their fame spread far and wide, until from the drawing rooms of Cincinnati they were introduced into its concert-halls, and there became known to Mr. W. C. Peters, who at once addressed letters requesting copies for publication. These were cheerfully furnished by the author. He did not look for remuneration. For "Uncle Ned," which first appeared (in 1847), he received none; "O Susanna!" soon followed, and "imagine my delight," he writes, "in receiving one hundred dollars in cash! Though this song was not successful," he continues, "yet the two fifty-dollar bills I received for it had the effect of starting me on my present vocation of song-writer." In pursuance of this decision, he entered into arrangements with new publishers, chiefly with Firth, Pond & Co. of New York, set himself to work, and began to pour out his productions with astonishing rapidity.

Out of the list, embracing about one hundred and fifty of his songs, the most flatteringly re-



ceived among his negro melodies were those already enumerated, followed by "Nelly was a Lady," in 1849; "My Old Kentucky Home," and "Camptown Races," in 1850; "Old Folks at Home," in 1851; "Massa's in the Cold Ground," in 1852; "O Boys, carry me 'long," in 1853; "Hard Times come again no more," in 1854; "'Way down South," and "O Lemuel," in 1858; "Old Black Joe," in 1860; and (noticeable only as his last in that line) "Don't bet your Money on the Shanghai," in 1861.

In all these compositions Foster adheres scrupulously to his theory adopted at the outset. His verses are distinguished by a *naivete* characteristic and appropriate, but consistent at the same time with common sense. Enough of the negro dialect is retained to preserve distinction, but not to offend. The sentiment is given in plain phrase and under homely illustration; but it is a sentiment nevertheless. The melodies are of twin birth literally with the verses, for Foster thought in tune as he traced in rhyme, and traced in rhyme as he thought in tune. Of easy modulation, severely simple in their structure, his airs have yet the graceful proportions, animated with the fervor, unostentatious but all-subduing, of



certain of the old hymns (not the chorals) derived from our fathers of a hundred years ago.

That he had struck upon the true way to the common heart, the successes attending his efforts surely demonstrate. His songs had an unparalleled circulation. The commissions accruing to the author on the sales of "Old Folks" alone amounted to fifteen thousand dollars. For permission to have his name printed on its title-page, as an advertising scheme, Mr. Christy paid five hundred dollars. Applications were unceasing from the various publishers of the country for some share, at least, of his patronage, and upon terms that might have seduced almost any one else; but the publishers with whom he originally engaged had won his esteem, and Foster adhered to them faithfully. Artists of the highest distinction favored him with their friendship; and Herz, Sivori, Ole Bull, Thalberg, were alike ready to approve his genius, and to testify that approval in the choice of his melodies as themes about which to weave their witcheries of embellishment. Complimentary letters from men of literary note poured in upon him; among others, one full of generous encouragement from Washington Irving, dearly prized and carefully treasured to the day.





of his death. Similar missives reached him from across the seas,—from strangers and from travelers in lands far remote; and he learned that, while “O Susanna!” was the familiar song of the cottager on the Clyde, “Uncle Ned” was known to the dwellers in tents among the Pyramids.

Of his sentimental songs, “Ah, may the Red Rose live alway!” “Maggie by my side,” “Jennie with the Light-Brown Hair,” “Willie, we have missed you,” “I see her still in my Dreams,” “Wilt thou be gone, Love” (a duet, the words adapted from a well-known scene in *Romeo and Juliet*), and “Come where my Love lies dreaming” (quartet), are among the leading favorites. “I see her still in my Dreams” appeared in 1861, shortly after the death of his mother, and is a tribute to the memory of her to whom he was devotedly attached. The verses to most of these airs—to all the successful ones—were of his own composition. Indeed, he could seldom satisfy himself in his “settings” of the stanzas of others. If the metrical and symmetrical features of the lines in hand chanced to disagree with his conception of the motion and proportion befitting in a musical interpretation; if the sentiment were one





that failed, whether from lack of appreciation or of sympathy on his part, to command absolute approval; or if the terms employed were not of a precise thread and tension,—if they were wanting, however minutely, in *vibratory* qualities,—with his own, of commensurate extent would be the failure attending the translation.

The last three years of his life Mr. Foster passed in New York. During all that time, his efforts, with perhaps one exception, were limited to the production of songs of a pensive character. The loss of his mother seems to have left an ineffaceable impression of melancholy upon his mind, and inspired such songs as “I dream of my Mother,” “I’ll be Home To-morrow,” “Leave me with my Mother,” and “Bury me in the Morning.” He died, after a brief illness, on the 13th of January, 1864. His remains reached Pittsburg on the 20th, and were conveyed to Trinity Church, where on the day following, in the presence of a large assembly, appropriate and impressive ceremonies took place, the choral services being sustained by a company of his former friends and associates. His body was then carried to the Allegheny Cemetery, and, to the music of “Old Folks at Home,” finally committed to the grave.



Mr. Foster was married, on the 22d of July, 1850, to Miss Jane D. McDowell of Pittsburg, by whom he had one only child, a daughter named Marian. He was of rather less than medium height, of slight frame, with parts well proportioned, and showing to advantage in repose, although not entirely so in action. His shoulders were marked by a slight droop,—the result of a habit of walking with his eyes fixed upon the ground a pace or two in advance of his feet. He nearly always when he ventured out, which was not often, walked alone. Arrived at the street-crossings, he would frequently pause, raise himself, cast a glance at the surroundings, and if he saw an acquaintance nod to him in token of recognition, and then, relapsing into the old posture, resume his way. At such times, —indeed, at any time, —while he did not repel, he took no pains to invite society. He was entertaining in conversation, although a certain hesitancy, from want of words and not from any organic defect, gave a broken style to his speech. For his study he selected the room in the topmost story of his house, farthest removed from the street, and was careful to have the floor of the apartment, and the avenues of approach to it, thickly



carpeted, to exclude as effectually as possible all noises, inside as well as outside of his own premises. The furniture of this room consisted of a chair, a lounge, a table, a music-rack, and a piano. From the sanctum so chosen, seldom opened to others, and never allowed upon any pretense to be disarranged, came his choicest compositions. His disposition was naturally amiable, although, from the tax imposed by close application to study upon his nervous system, he was liable to fits of fretfulness and petulance that, only occasional and transient as they were, told nevertheless with disturbing effect upon his temper. In the same unfortunate direction tended the force of a habit grown insidiously upon him, — a habit against the damning control of which (as no one better than the writer of this article knows) he wrestled with an earnestness indescribable, resorting to all the remedial expedients which professional skill or his own experience could suggest, but never entirely delivering himself from its inexorable mastery.

In the true estimate of genius, its achievements only approximate the highest standard of excellence as they are representative, or illustrative, of important truth. They are only great as they are





good. If Mr. Foster's art embodied no higher idea than the vulgar notion of the negro as a man-monkey,—a thing of tricks and antics,—a funny specimen of superior gorilla,—then it might have proved a tolerable catch-penny affair, and commanded an admiration among boys of various growths until its novelty wore off. But the art in his hands teemed with a nobler significance. It dealt, in its simplicity, with universal sympathies, and taught us all to feel with the slaves the lowly joys and sorrows it celebrated.

May the time be far in the future ere lips fail to move to its music, or hearts to respond to its influence, and may we who owe him so much preserve gratefully the memory of the master,  
STEPHEN COLLINS FOSTER.

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